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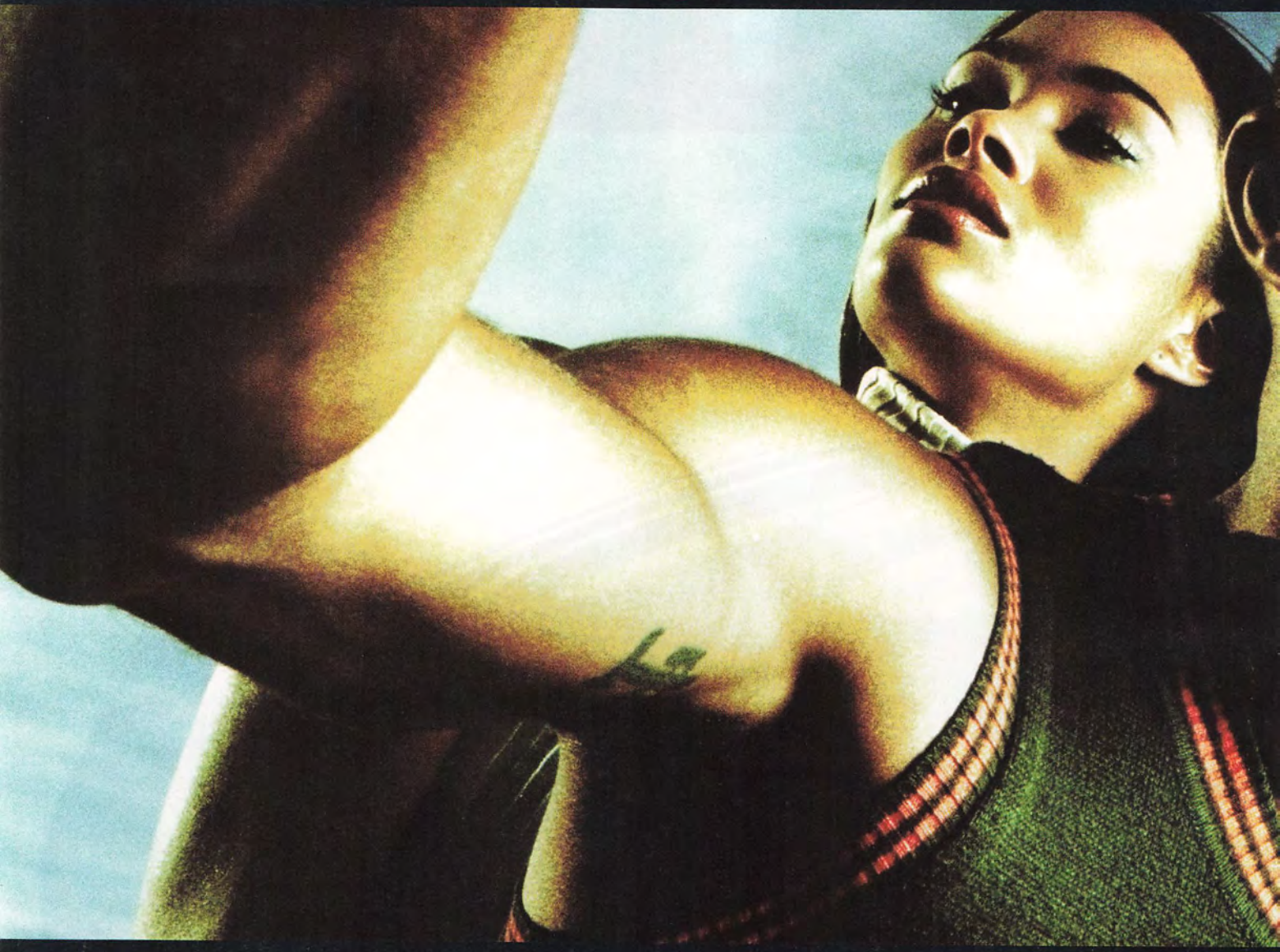

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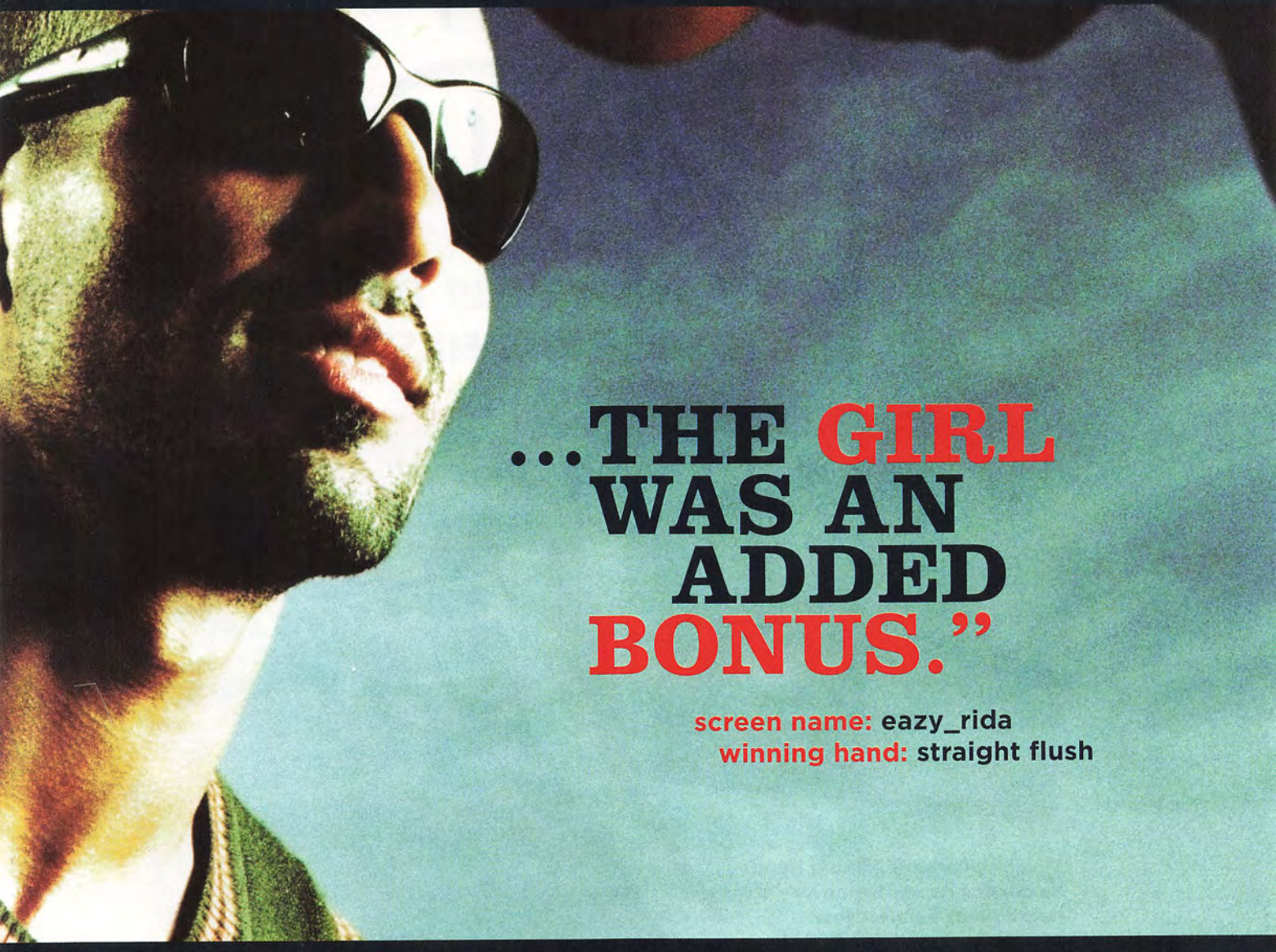

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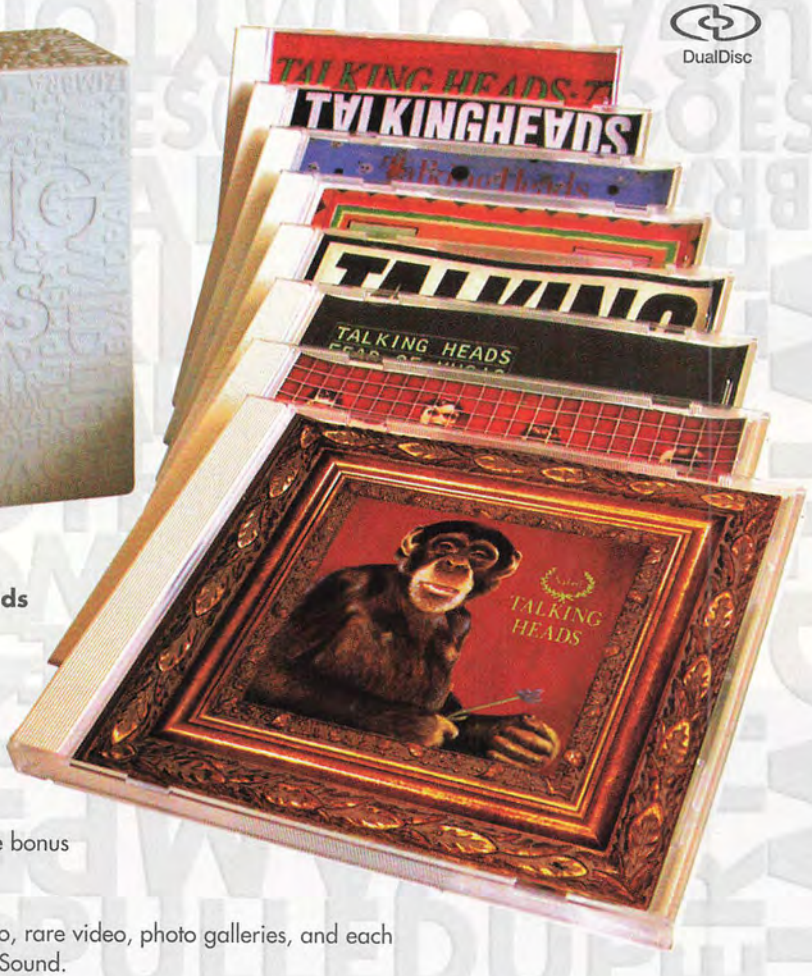

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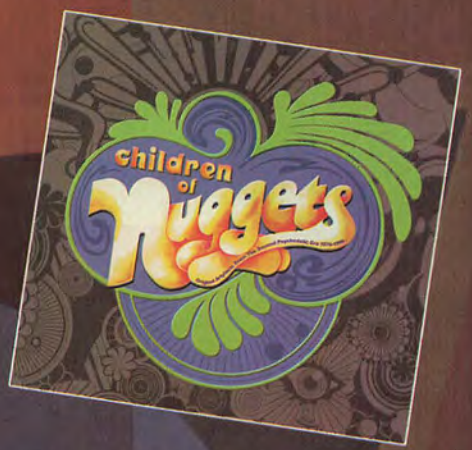

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68 FRANZ FERDINAND

How did a band of bespoke Scottish art-fops become huge in the U.S. of A.? By writing songs about dudes dancing with dudes, of course!

76 500 GREATEST SONGS

SINCE YOU WERE BORN

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Joan Jett: Loves rock & roll, kittens.

ON THE COVER

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"WE DON'T SEE THIS AS A JOB." ALEX KAPRANOS, FRANZ FERDINAND

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Blender, I can always count on you to say the sweetest things. "You know you're something special and you look like you're the best" is from Duran Duran's "Rio."

MARLY WILDER, CHICAGO

YOUR MOVE, KANYE!

Re Kanye West's statement that the hard thing is trying to find something that he's not good at: I have a suggestion for something he might like to try—modesty!

DANIEL YOUNG, STONE MOUNTAIN, GA

Snap! Oh, how cruelly your words will sting Mr. West as he counts his money surrounded by supermodels on a bed made of solid gold.

LET'S TALK ABOUT SEX (PART 1)

Thanks for the tribute to Luther Vandross. I was saddened to hear of his much-too-early passing. He was a great talent and will be dearly missed. As long as I live, I will never forget losing my virginity (to my best friend's older sister no less!) while listening to his classic *Never Too Much*.

NICK WHALUM, PHILADELPHIA

That started very RIP, but then became very TMI.

LET'S TALK ABOUT SEX (PART 2)

Really enjoyed your Be Your Own Pet piece, but I could have done without the description of lead singer Jemina Pearl as the "lovechild of Britney Spears and Iggy Pop." What a disturbing mental image. I mean, who wants to think about those two having sex?

JENNIFER NORTON, SUGAR LAND, TX

To be honest, that's what we spend most of our time doing.

Kanye West: So cool, he can wear white after Labor Day.

CONGRATULATIONS TO ELIZABETH AUGUST OF NORTH MASSAPEQUA, NY, **WINNER OF *BLENDER*'S AUGUST CROSSWORD CONTEST,** WHO SCORED A ZEN PORTABLE MEDIA CENTER.

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BABY, DON'T GO!

I couldn't help notice in your coverage of Live 8 that Gwyneth Paltrow's kid Apple was wearing presumably ear-protecting headphones during dad Chris Martin's set. While I'm all for looking after children's health, it did occur to me that her ticket could have gone to someone old enough to actually hear what was going on—like me.

SARA KERRIS, BALTIMORE

BROTHERLY HATE

Congratulations for publishing John Landis's description of your writer Steve Kandell [the Blues Brothers director called him a "cocksucker"]. Next time some famous person starts bitching about how critics are always saying nasty things about them without fear of repercussions, I recommend you show them that.

JESSICA MCCLENDON, DAVENPORT, FL

PLAY BALL

Great article on the songs baseball players want played when they walk onto the field! How about a follow-up on songs they should have played for former greats?

Ted Williams:	"Cold As Ice" (Foreigner)
Mickey Mantle:	"One Bourbon, One Scotch, One Beer" (George Thorogood)
Ty Cobb:	"Mean As Hell" (Johnny Cash)
Gaylord Perry:	"Hail, Hail, Spit N' Drool" (The Hives)

FRED KUHLMAN, KOKOMO, IN

ROCK OF RAGES

Re your news story that Kid Rock received a suspended sentence after hitting someone, and had to pay money to replace a pair of his victim's broken eyeglasses: I always suspected he was the kind of guy that would pick on someone who wears glasses.

JARED PIER, ALLENTOWN, PA →

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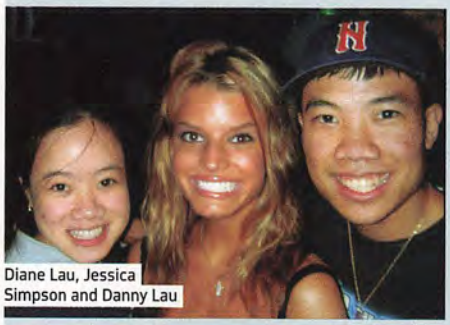
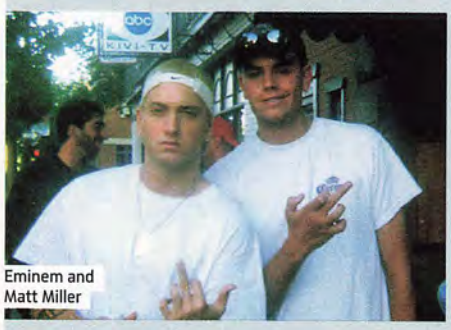


Diane Lau, Jessica Simpson and Danny Lau

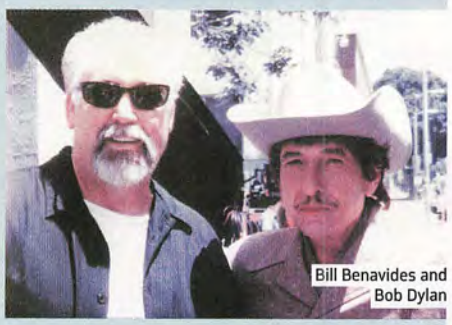
Frederick Klepeiss and Jay-Z



Eminem and Matt Miller

Hailey Kasper and Shakira

Ashlee Simpson and Carlo DeSantis



Bill Benavides and Bob Dylan

HAVE A GREAT picture of yourself invading a pop star's personal space? Send it our way, and if we print it, you'll receive a Sony-Ericsson S710a camera cellphone with a full-color screen!

Send entries to Superfan at *Blender*, 1040 Sixth Avenue, 22nd floor, New York, NY 10018

WACK

I found it extraordinarily insensitive of you, *Blender*, to include crack on your Hot 100 List. Did you conveniently forget the fact that it's an epidemic in this country, with more than 8 million people having tried it (according to the White House)? An insidiously addictive drug is hardly "hot."

ANGELA SEMERTON, DURHAM, NC

LITERATURE 101

Thanks for the picture of Ryan Adams [August 2005]. Now we know what the title of the last Harry Potter book will be: *Harry Potter and the Bowl of Smoke*.

DON VANDYKE, QUINCY, IL

RICH OR DEAD?

As a fan of 50 Cent, I can't wait to see *Get Rich or Die Tryin'*. Although, as it's based on his life, my money would be on his character's almost dying but then getting rich.

JAMES CASHER, SIOUX FALLS, SD

But surely the big question is: Does he get into ballet school?

MISSING DRUGS

Nice try with the rock drug timeline in the August issue. It might have been accurate if it had included Ray Charles, maybe Willie Nelson and especially the Doors. Can't believe you didn't include the Doors.

LEO OYERVIDEZ, MCALLEN, TX →

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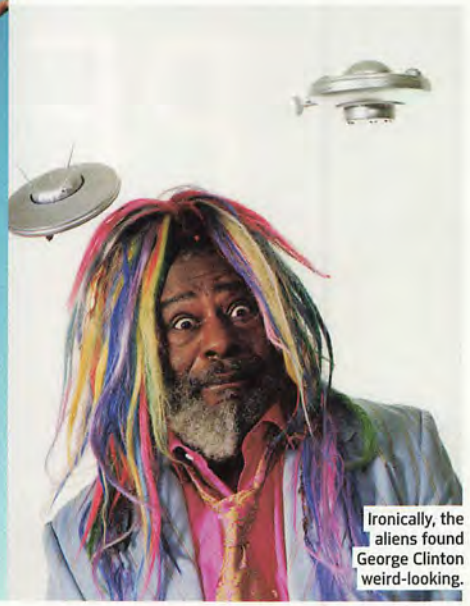
Aubrey's inner-ear infection was beginning to affect her dance moves.



Ironically, the aliens found George Clinton weird-looking.

WIN ME!

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THE POP STAR

SYDNEY
THE DOG

LET'S TALK ABOUT SEX (PART 3)

I'm not surprised that George Clinton doesn't have sex to his own records. Really, given the amount of drugs that guy has done, the really amazing thing is that he has sex at all.

BRAD WARE, OAKLAND HILLS, CA

WHISTLIN' DIXIE

I saw that you were going to run a feature called "The 500 Greatest Songs Since You Were Born." I'm 92, and I would like to nominate "Sleepy Old Afternoon" by the Whistlin' Dixie Reynolds Brothers.

ETHAN BROOKS, MADISON, WV

No you're not—and no such song exists. (Although you made us check. Happy now?)

8 BALLS

Yes, hopefully the Live 8 shows had a positive effect on Western governments as well as reminding people in this country to count their blessings. But even if none of this was true, then as far as I'm concerned David Beckham's onstage declaration ("As I'm sure you are all agreed, this is one of the most historical days I have ever personally been involved in") would still have made the whole thing worthwhile.

KAREN BAKER, BELMONT, MA

BO NO!

Bo Bice doesn't think there's anything wrong with marijuana? You'll excuse me if I don't take drug advice from someone who can't spell "Love" and looks like an Allman Brothers Band drum tech.

MATT DURLACHER, OYSTER BAY, NY

Dude, you're really harshing our buzz.

I.N.T.E.R.E.S.T.I.N.G.

Your article on M.I.A. was fascinating. What an incredible/tragic life she's had. No wonder she makes such interesting music. And I imagine it reflects her ambivalence about her terrorist father that, while "the only thing he left [her was] a name," she doesn't actually use it.

MONICA EVANS, SYRACUSE, NY

ON THE MAKE

At last! I was wondering how long it was going to take you to recognize the booty-liciousness of *Making the Band* star Aubrey. Never mind that P. Diddy made her a star; he should be grateful to her for making *Making the Band* must-see TV.

WILL JOLIVETTE, NASHVILLE

IT'S OUR TURN TO BE SARCASTIC

Jessica Simpson, Jay-Z, Lindsay Lohan, Paris Hilton? Way to phone it in, *Blender*! There's so much duplication from last year's Hot List that you wouldn't know anything good happened at all this year.

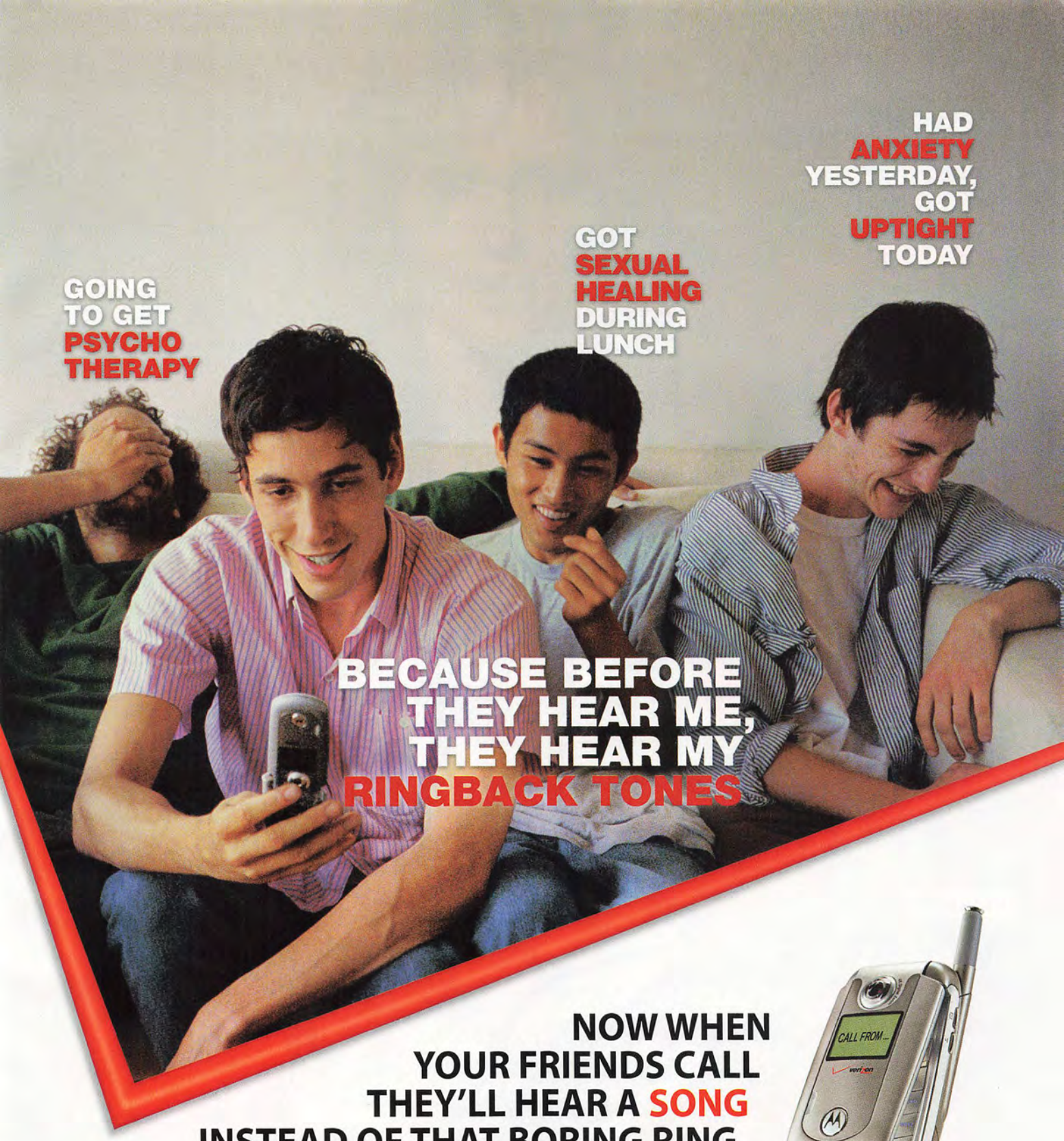
MITCHELL SHAW, AUBURN HILLS, MI

In retrospect, the Hot 100 may have featured too many celebrities from the year before that have simply disappeared from the cultural map. After all, whatever *did* happen to Jessica Simpson?

CORRECTION

In our August 2005 Burner section, we ran three photographs purporting to show Mariah Carey experiencing a "wardrobe malfunction" at a live performance in May. After going to press, we discovered that the photographs had been digitally altered and that no such incident had occurred. *Blender* regrets the error.

AUBREY: GUZMAN; CLINTON: CHRIS BUCK; BJÖRK: KEVIN MAZUR/WIREIMAGE.COM



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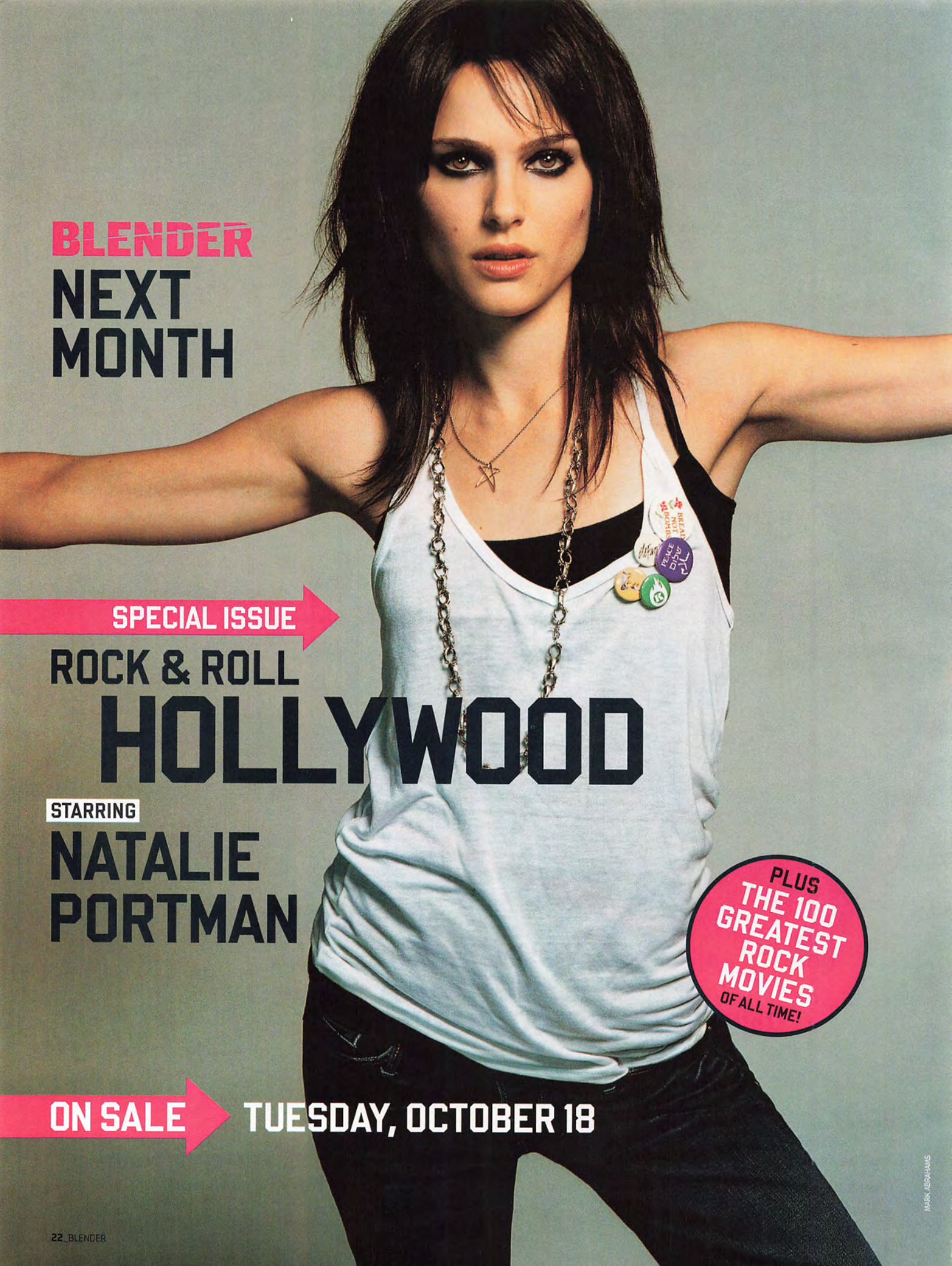
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ROCK & ROLL
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PLUS THE 100 GREATEST ROCK MOVIES OF ALL TIME!
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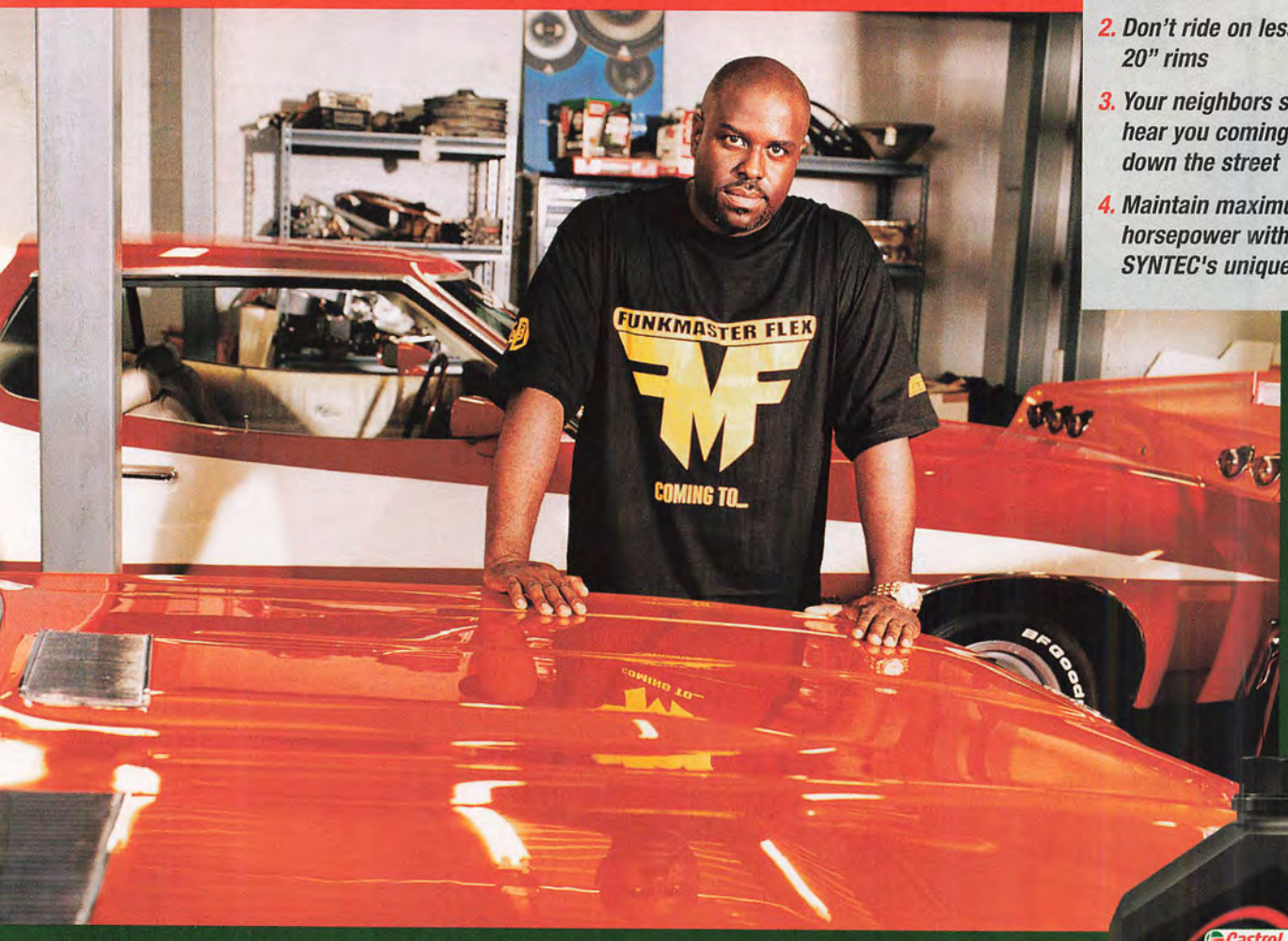
CASTROL SYNTEC RIDE REMIX

"These cars have become my passion. I like to spend all my spare time here working on them."

– Funkmaster Flex

TUNER 411

1. *Make sure you always have custom leather covering your seats and dash*
2. *Don't ride on less than 20" rims*
3. *Your neighbors should hear you coming from down the street*
4. *Maintain maximum horsepower with Castrol SYNTEC's unique formula*



Radio DJ…TV Host…Album Artist…NYC hip-hopper and Castrol SYNTEC frontman Funkmaster Flex is in full effect—a master muscle car guy with a complete fleet of hot customized cars. Blender spent an afternoon at Flex's Bronx garage checking out what's under the hoods of his ragin' rebuilt and remixed rides.

Check out SYNTEC's superior performance at www.castrol.com/syntec

THERE'S MORE TO LIFE THAN HORSEPOWER.

BUT WHAT KIND OF LIFE IS IT?

Air. Food. Horsepower. A man with his priorities in order needs Castrol SYNTEC. No leading motor oil provides more horsepower.* SYNTEC's unique formula reduces power-robbing deposit formation. Have you unlocked all your car's power? Check out SYNTEC's superior performance at www.castrol.com/syntec.

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*10W-30 as tested vs. leading competitive 10W-30.

IN HIS SENIOR WILL, RIVERS CUOMO LEFT "A CAN OF HAIR SPRAY FOR ANYONE WHO DARES TO BE DIFFERENT." P.30

10.05

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ... AND PLENTY YOU DON'T!

BURNER

ROASTED

PAMELA ANDERSON IS "HONORED" BY COURTNEY LOVE, CHARO ON TV

Escorted by a carrot wearing a "Go Veg" button, Pamela Anderson arrived at her Comedy Central Roast to be good-naturedly mocked by colleagues and loved ones.

The crème-of-the-crop attendees included Anna Nicole Smith, Andy Dick, Dennis Rodman, Charo and an agitated Courtney Love, who from the red carpet expressed a desire to "fuck one of the paparazzi."

The former *Baywatch* actress was serenaded by Tommy Lee, who was recently quoted as saying that he and his ex-wife are "crazy in love" and "taking things slow." Anderson, however, when asked about their rumored third trip to the altar, has said "absolutely not!" *NOEL BODDIE*

JEFF KRAVITZ/FILMMAGIC.COM

MAD FLOW

DID FERGIE UNLEASH THE PHUNK ONSTAGE?

During a Black Eyed Peas performance at San Diego's annual Street Scene in July—for which the band arrived an hour late—a disheveled Fergie sported a wet spot on her crotch area, leading to rumors that she answered nature's call while onstage.

The band's publicist declined to comment on the origins of the mystery stain, though onlookers say, and local radio stations reported, that it seemed to appear suddenly after the second song.

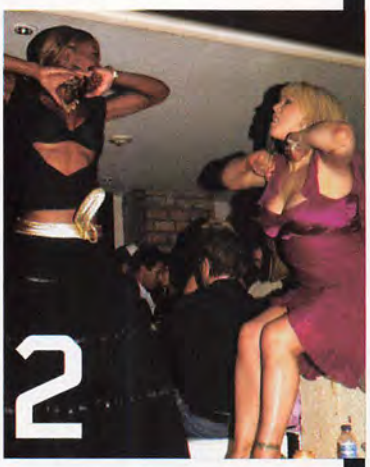
"I am 100% certain Fergie wet herself on stage," said Kristen Sutton, who was in the audience that night. "I feel horrible for her, but I respect her for trying to play through it."

TONY MCMENAMIN

CLOWNIN'

BIRTHDAY GIRL COURTNEY LOVE GETS HER KRUMP ON IN MIAMI

Forty-one years young, Love and a dancer from the krump documentary *Rize* climbed atop a nightclub bar.



The recently rehabbed singer fixated on the krump specialist's dance, attempting to mimic the demanding moves.

Feeling more confident with the act of krumping, Love freestyled on the leg of another krump dancer.

NEWS ROUNDUP

LINDSAY LOHAN has revealed that 50 Cent once called her agent asking for her number. The rapper was apparently impressed by her performance in *Mean Girls*.

According to reports, Britpop bad boys OASIS followed their summer Madison Square Garden show by hanging out with an unlikely new friend: Mary-Kate Olsen.

THE GAME has apparently started a new feud, this time with formidable rap mogul Suge Knight. Eyewitnesses at an L.A. party claimed a member of Knight's posse tried grabbing a chain from the former G-Unit member's neck.

"I DID NOT KNOW MY WRITING SKILLS COULD GO TO SUCH A DEPTH"

R. KELLY ON HIS FIVE-PART EPIC, "TRAPPED IN THE CLOSET"

Britney, Kevin and the future of music (maybe).

"Hick Hop"

RAPPER-TO-BE KEVIN FEDERLINE TAPS 50 CENT PRODUCER

BRITNEY SPEARS'S husband/babydaddy, Kevin Federline, was recently photographed leaving an L.A. recording studio with a demo CD. Written in magic marker was "Disco D"—the stage name of 24-year-old NYC mixtape DJ David Shayman, who produced a track on 50's *The Massacre* titled "Ski Mask Way."

Soon after the photos surfaced, a post by someone claiming to be Disco D appeared on the message board of hollertronix.com, a website frequented by DJs and hip-hop fans.

"Seriously tho, this shit is on the new school hick hop next level," the poster raved. "We did one song together last week which is absolutely bananas and some of the catchiest shit I've ever heard." The comments were later removed from the site.

When asked about his collaboration with former backup dancer Federline, Disco D said he was unable to comment at the present time. Federline, who has not yet landed a record deal, also declined to comment. *JOSH EELLS*

THE OVERSIMPLIFIER

COMPLICATED IDEAS REDUCED TO AN UNDEMANDING DIAGRAM

POPULAR CELEBRITY HOBBIES

LOVE: SETH BROWARNIK (3); SPEARS: SPLASH NEWS (2); CARDS: JAMES WORRELL/PHOTONICA/GETTY IMAGES; COCAINE: ALPHONSE TELYMONDE; KELLY: JOHN GRESS/REUTERS/LANDOV/ILLUSTRATION BY GARY FRENCH

"Where the bitches and the ho's at?/At the studio/That's where we make our fuckin' money at/At the studio."

This is a reproduction of an original Golden Wing painting commissioned by VH1.
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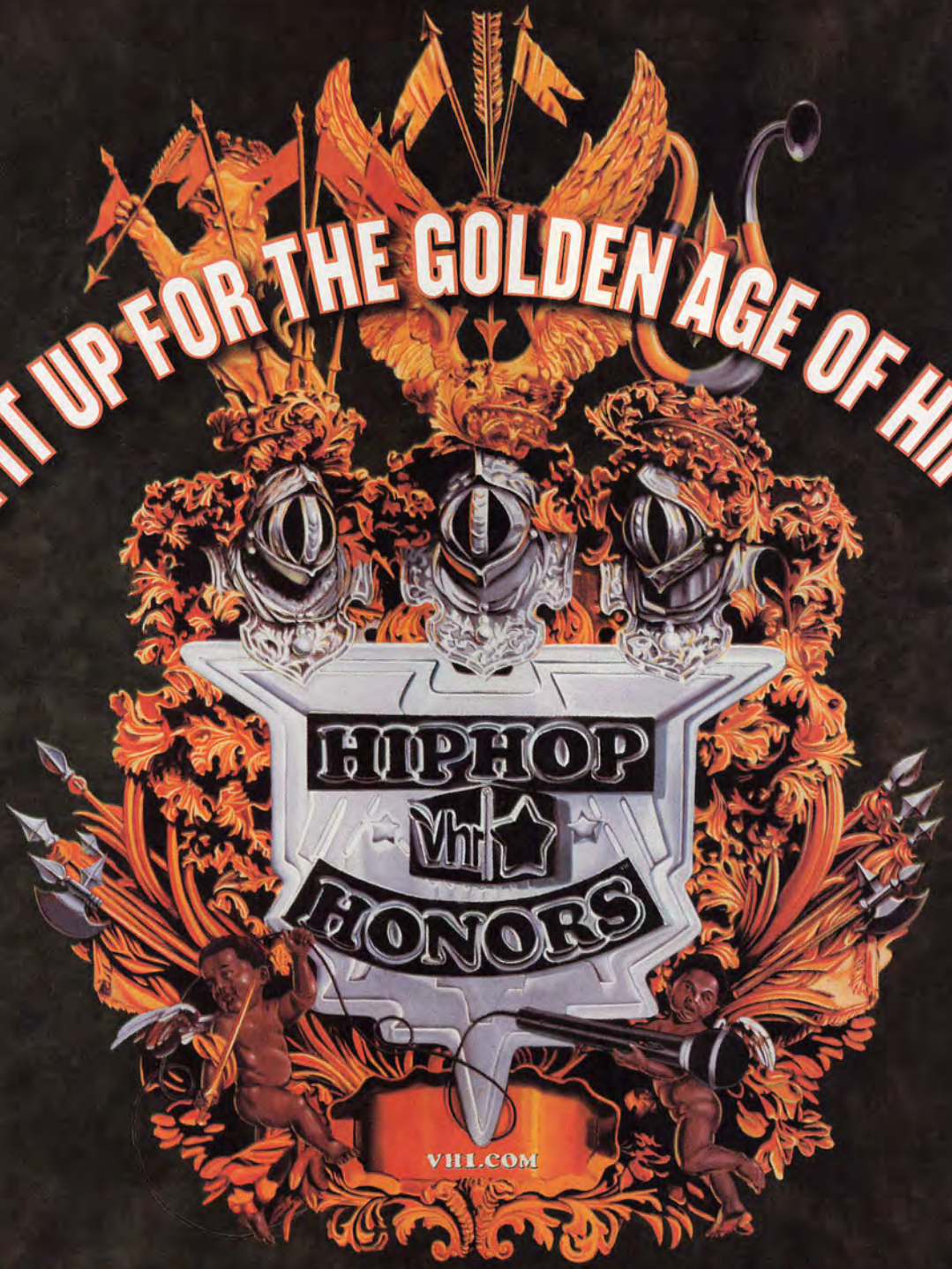
GIVE IT UP FOR THE GOLDEN AGE OF HIP HOP



TODAY'S BIGGEST STARS PAY TRIBUTE TO THOSE WHO GOT THE PARTY STARTED.

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The Honorees: **Big Daddy Kane • Grandmaster Flash and The Furious Five • Ice T LL Cool J • The Notorious B.I.G. • Salt-N-Pepa** and the film **Boyz N The Hood**

Performing Live: Common, Eve, Fat Joe, Jazzy Jeff, Kanye West, Missy Elliott, Nelly, Snoop Dogg and T.I.

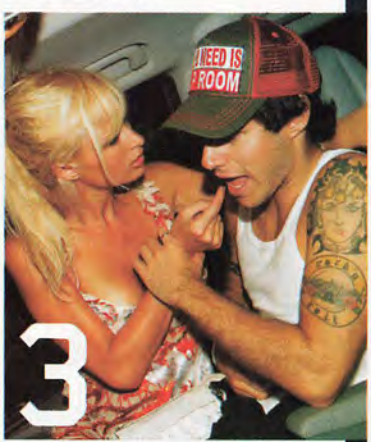
Monday, September 26 at 9/8C

HANDSY!

PARIS HILTON AND FIANCÉ PARIS LATSIS DISCUSS ETIQUETTE IN THE FRONT SEAT OF AN SUV

→ While vacationing in St. Tropez, after a night of clubbing, male Paris places his hand under female Paris's skirt in plain view of several onlookers.

→ Enraged, female Paris pulls her arm back and threatens to hit the shamefaced Greek.



→ Female Paris gestures for her male counterpart to provide more eye contact as he attempts to explain his inappropriate behavior.

NEWS ROUNDUP

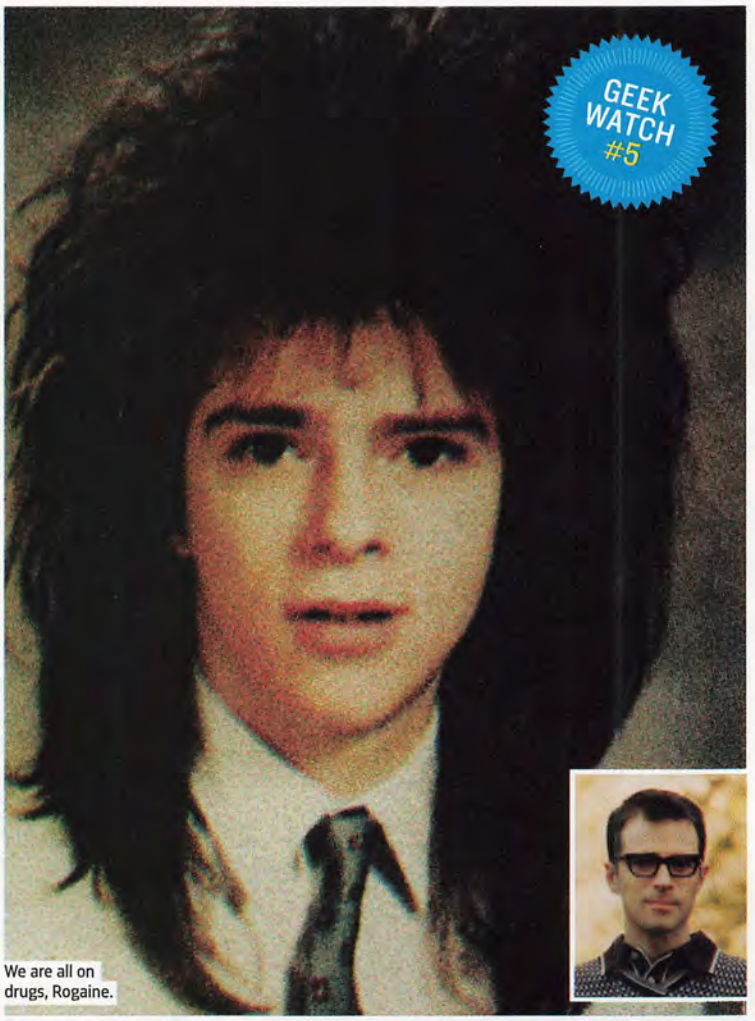
MICHAEL DAHLQUIST, drummer for post-rock outfit Silkworm, was killed when a suicidal woman drove her car into his at an intersection in Skokie, Illinois.

Indie darling **CONOR OBERST** showed his less sensitive side at this year's Glastonbury Festival by speaking disparagingly of the Make Poverty History campaign and calling deceased BBC DJ John Peel a "cokehead."

Lead singer Patrick Sherry of the punk band **BAD BEAT REVUE** died after falling headfirst when he tried to jump up and grab a lighting rig during a performance at the Warehouse in Leeds, England.

WORD!

"I FEEL LIKE I'M CARRYING HIP-HOP, AND THE STATE OF MUSIC TOO."
KANYE WEST



We are all on drugs, Rogaine.

POODLEHEAD

RIVERS CUOMO'S YEARBOOK PHOTO CONFIRMS WHAT WE ALREADY KNEW: HE LOVES HAIR METAL

WEEZER FRONTMAN RIVERS Cuomo's non-ironic love for '80s metal bands like Queensryche and Stryper—evident in his throwback songs, such as "Hash Pipe," "Dope Nose" and "We Are All on Drugs"—is further proved by his high school yearbook photo.

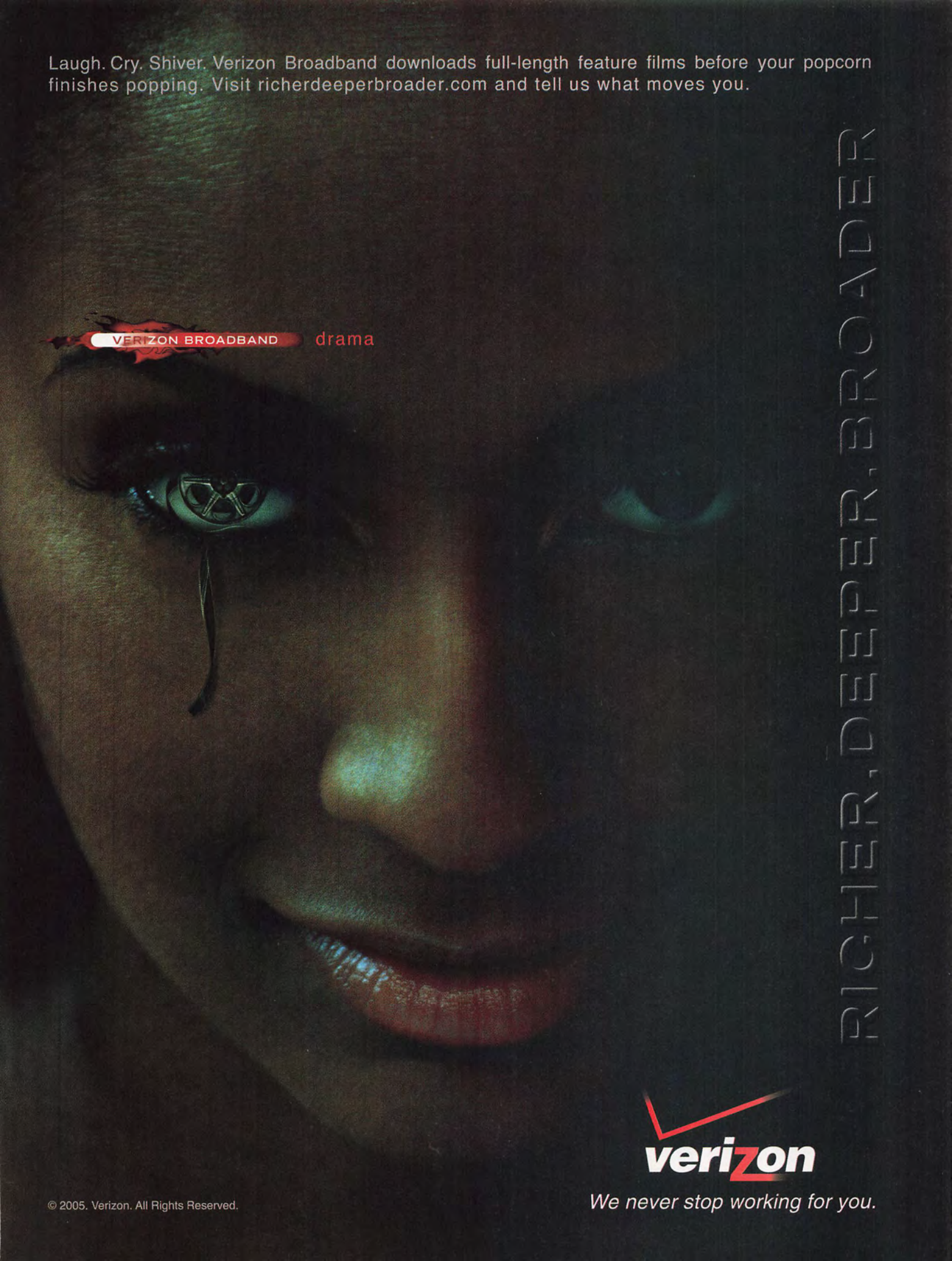
The 35-year-old singer's mousse-damaged senior-year portrait from E.O. Smith High School in Storrs, Connecticut, was taken in 1988, before Rivers (known to his classmates as Peter Kitts) and his hair-metal band Avant Garde moved to L.A. and became bicycle-shorts-wearing Sunset Strip hangers-on Zoom.

Prior to leaving for Hollywood semi-stardom, Kitts, in full mullet glory, honed his musical chops in the school's barbershop quartet (featuring, curiously, five members) and took guitar lessons from the guitarist for hometown heroes Fates Warning.

In his senior will, Kitts left "a can of hair spray for anyone who dares to be different." Avant Garde guitarist Kevin Ridel, who now fronts the band AM Radio, remembers his bandmate's pouffy coif well. "It took him an hour to do his hair, all the time," he says. *STEVE KANDELL*

Avant Garde: More like Avant Mullet!

HILTON: FAME PICTURES; AVANT GARDE: MICHAEL AND KRIS STANTON; WEST: STEPHEN LOVEKIN/WIREIMAGE.COM/ILLUSTRATION BY GARY FRENCH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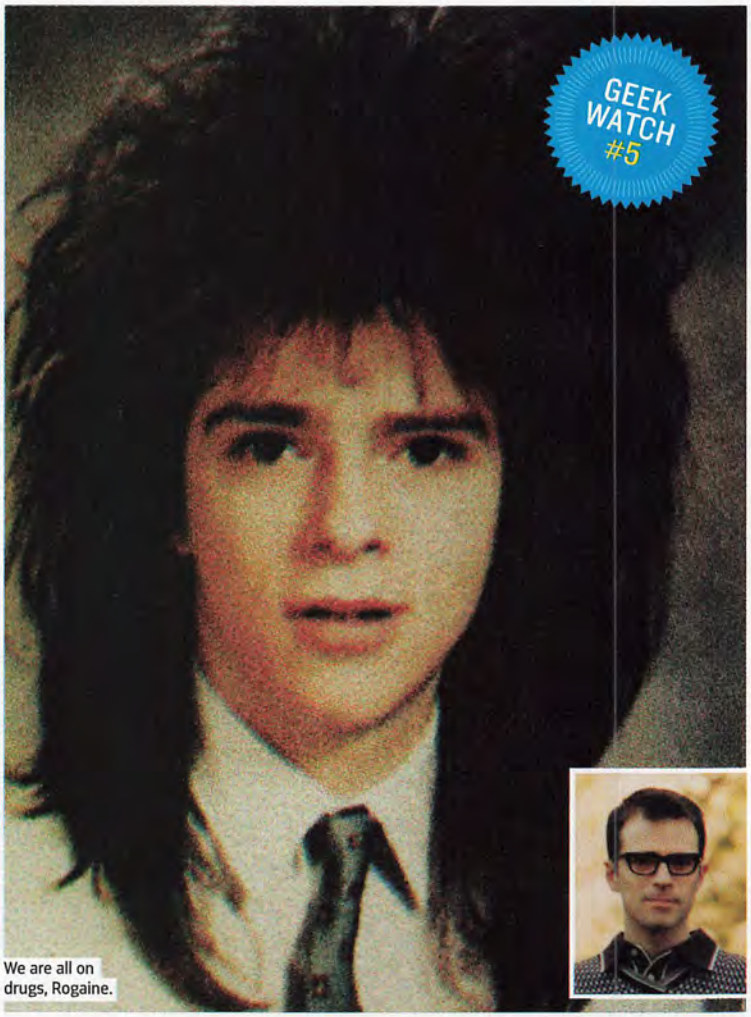

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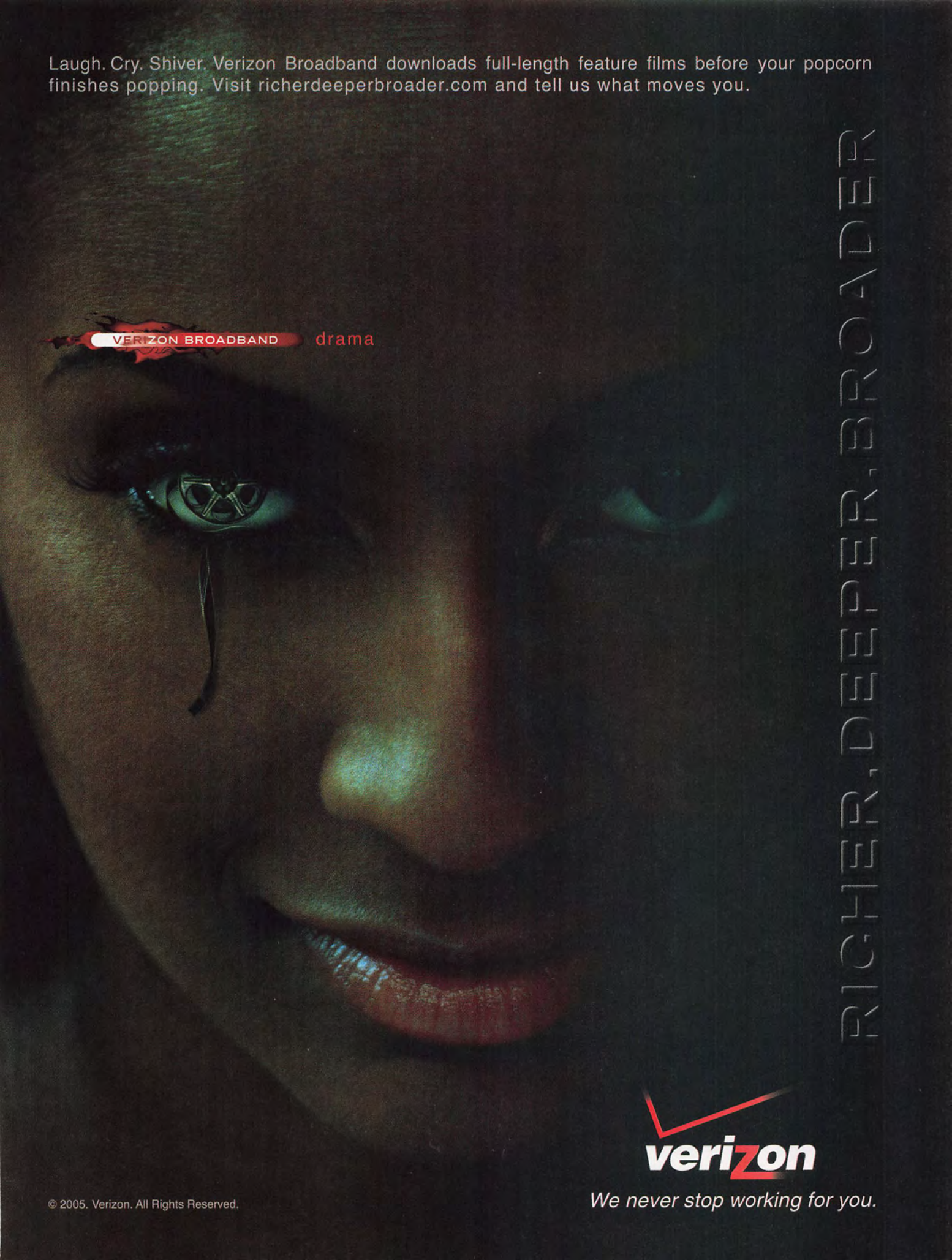
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ALMOST FAMOUS

THE LIKE

THREE BOOKISH GIRLS FROM L.A. PLAY DREAMY GUITAR ROCK ABOUT BOYS

BY JESSICA HUNDLEY
PHOTOGRAPHY BY AMANDA DE CADENET

THE LIKE'S REHEARSAL space is a dank, dark room in a Los Angeles warehouse, not exactly the kind of place you'd expect to find three sweet-faced girls in frilly dresses. "It's a pit," admits 19-year-old singer Elizabeth Berg, "but we were banned from playing in our parents' living rooms."

Despite their banishment from the family nest, the Like (rounded out by bassist Charlotte Froom, 19, and drummer Tennessee Thomas, 20) still get some support at home. All three are daughters of music-biz bigwigs: Tony Berg is a former Geffen Records A&R rep, Mitchell Froom is an acclaimed producer (Los Lobos, Crowded House, Suzanne Vega), and Pete Thomas plays drums for Elvis Costello. The girls are steeled for charges of nepotism, but swear their folks have interfered little with their career.

"Our dads introduced us," remembers London-born Thomas, who is tall and swaggering, "and we just clicked right away."

Froom, who hides behind a dark swath of hair, is the quiet one of the group. And pale Berg is usually barefoot and prone to poetic phrasings. Having self-released three EPs and toured with Phantom Planet and Maroon 5, the band celebrated their graduation from high school with a deal from Geffen.

Their full-length debut, *Are You Thinking What I'm Thinking?*, is a cross between the introspection of Sylvia Plath's bleak novel *The Bell Jar* and the layered guitar swirl of '90s college-radio lasses like Belly and the Sundays—left-of-the-dial prettiness matched with surprisingly sophisticated musings on love, politics and literature.

"The first song I ever wrote was about my boyfriend when I was 13, who I broke up with over the phone in order to win a $20 bet," Berg says with a laugh. "But I'd like to think our writing has gotten deeper since then."

OUTNOW *ARE YOU THINKING WHAT I'M THINKING?* GEFFEN

ALL ABOUT US!

FAVORITE ALBUM RIGHT NOW
Bringing It All Back Home by Bob Dylan (Berg)

WORST THING ABOUT TOURING
We're all underage, so we can't get drunk and spend the tour in a numbed state. (Thomas)

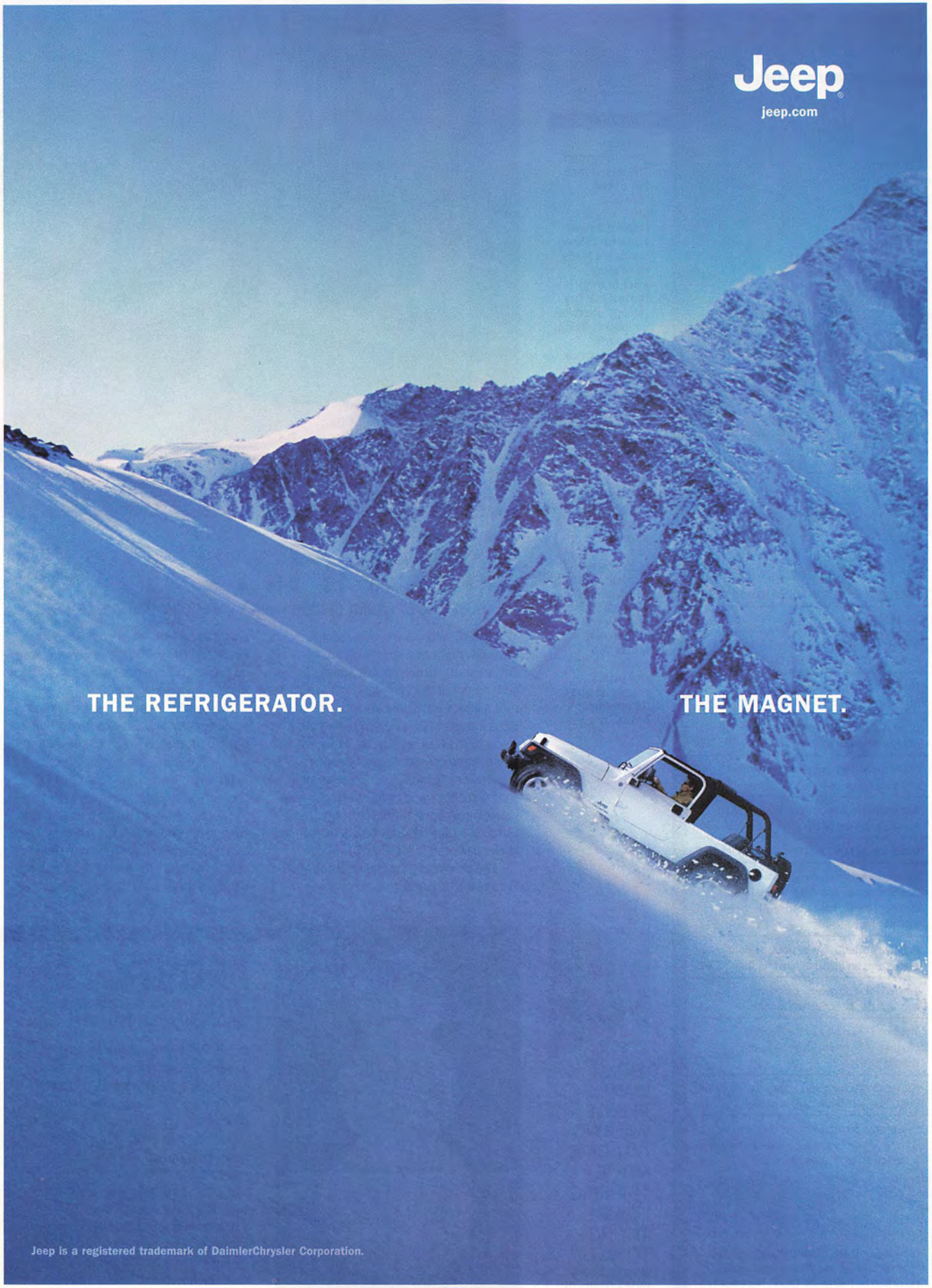
LAST BOOK READ
Nick Kent's *The Dark Stuff*—stories of post-prime rock stars. All the terrible bits. It's awesome. (Froom)

IF THE ROCK-STAR THING DOESN'T WORK OUT
I'll be a forensic pathologist. (Berg)

The Like, left to right: Charlotte Froom, Tennessee Thomas, Elizabeth Berg.

CHARLOTTE: TANK TOP BY **CATHARINE MALANDRINO AT CURVE**, L.A. SHORTS BY **MARC BY MARC JACOBS**
TENNESSEE: DRESS BY **CAITIE ET MARCS AT RESURRECTION**, L.A. NECKLACE BY **GABRIELA ARTIGAS AT AERO & CO.**, L.A.
ELIZABETH: BRACELETS BY **APARTMENT 3**, L.A.

STYLIST: RACHEL SANDERSON; JENNIFER PITT FOR AVANTGROUPE.COM; MORGAN FOR BARDEENAGENCY.COM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Mick awaits arrival of female breast.

WHEN WILL YOUR FAVORITE POP STAR CROAK?

#22 MICK JAGGER

BIRTH DATE	JULY 26, 1943
CURRENT AGE	62
DEATH CALCULATOR STARTS AT AGE	79

CATEGORY	YEARS ADDED/SUBTRACTED
White male.	-2
Good genes: Mick's gym-teacher dad, now 93, officiated at 1948 Olympics.	+5
Brain gymnast: Composer, actor, attended London School of Economics.	+4
Healthy diet: Fresh vegetables and omega-3's from salmon.	+2
Secret jock: Gym sessions every other day with personal trainer.	+2
Bad blood: Ex-wife Jerry Hall claims Mick banged groupies on the dining room table.	-1
Super sperm: Has 7 kids (with four women).	+3
Sweet dreams: Claims he gets eight hours' sleep a night (+1). "If the band's lacking energy, it's because we spent all last night fucking" (-2).	-1
Positive attitude: Loves work, celebrity status, has an unabated lust for life.	+2
Toxins: Past drug use; current exposure to secondhand smoke.	-3
The good life: Lives in rural French chateau (+3), haunted by headless female ghost (-2).	+1
Father stress: Daughter Liz smitten by Calum Best, "famous for shagging women."	-2
Celebrated fornicator: Unprotected sex with Mick akin to sleeping with the sexual histories of 12,000 partners.	-6
ESTIMATED LIFE EXPECTANCY	83
PROJECTED YEAR OF DEATH	2026

Gerontologist **DR. DEMKO:** "Jagger's diet, longevity genes and fitness regimen could carry him to 100 years. Or, his high-risk promiscuity could cancel his ticket by age 70."

NEWS ROUNDUP

Christian pressure group The Resistance has asked JESSICA SIMPSON to reshoot a new video for "These Boots Are Made for Walkin'" after finding the original too "slutty." Despite Simpson's being a pastor's daughter and a "Christian role model," the group claims the star is fast turning herself into "a singing stripper."

GERALD LEVERT has pleaded guilty to charges of assault and attempted obstruction following an incident with police officers during a traffic stop. The R&B singer was ordered to donate $2,000 to a police charity and pay for an officer's broken glasses.

Quiet disco: We'll all be doing it soon (maybe)!

SHHHH...

BUBBLING UP: **QUIET DISCOS** WHERE RAVERS WEAR HEADPHONES

THE MUSIC WAS blaring on a recent Saturday night at a small club in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, but it wasn't coming out of the speakers. In a silent room, dance music aficionados at Stain Bar's inaugural Quiet Disco party flailed wildly to the DJ's selections, which were piped into their wireless headphones.

The idea for the Quiet Disco comes from a recent trend of pantomime raves started in Holland three years ago by Dutch DJs Nico Okkerse (a.k.a. NO DJ) and Michael Minten (a.k.a. DJ OD).

The pair, who host events throughout Europe and Canada, most recently supplied this summer's Glastonbury Festival with 1,000 wireless headphones so ravers could dance until 5 A.M. without disturbing the neighbors.

Okkerse thinks headphones would enhance any concert experience. "If people pay $50 a ticket to see a band, they'll choose headphones over listening to PA systems that distort the noise," he says.

For Stain owner Krista Madsen, who tended bar that night, the novel system has other advantages. "No one tried to talk to me and no one wanted anything from me other than a drink." *WARREN COHEN*

WORD!

"I DON'T WANT PEOPLE WALKING OUT OF A MOVIE THINKING I WAS TRYING TO ACT."

JESSICA SIMPSON ON HER TURN IN *THE DUKES OF HAZZARD*

FROSTY

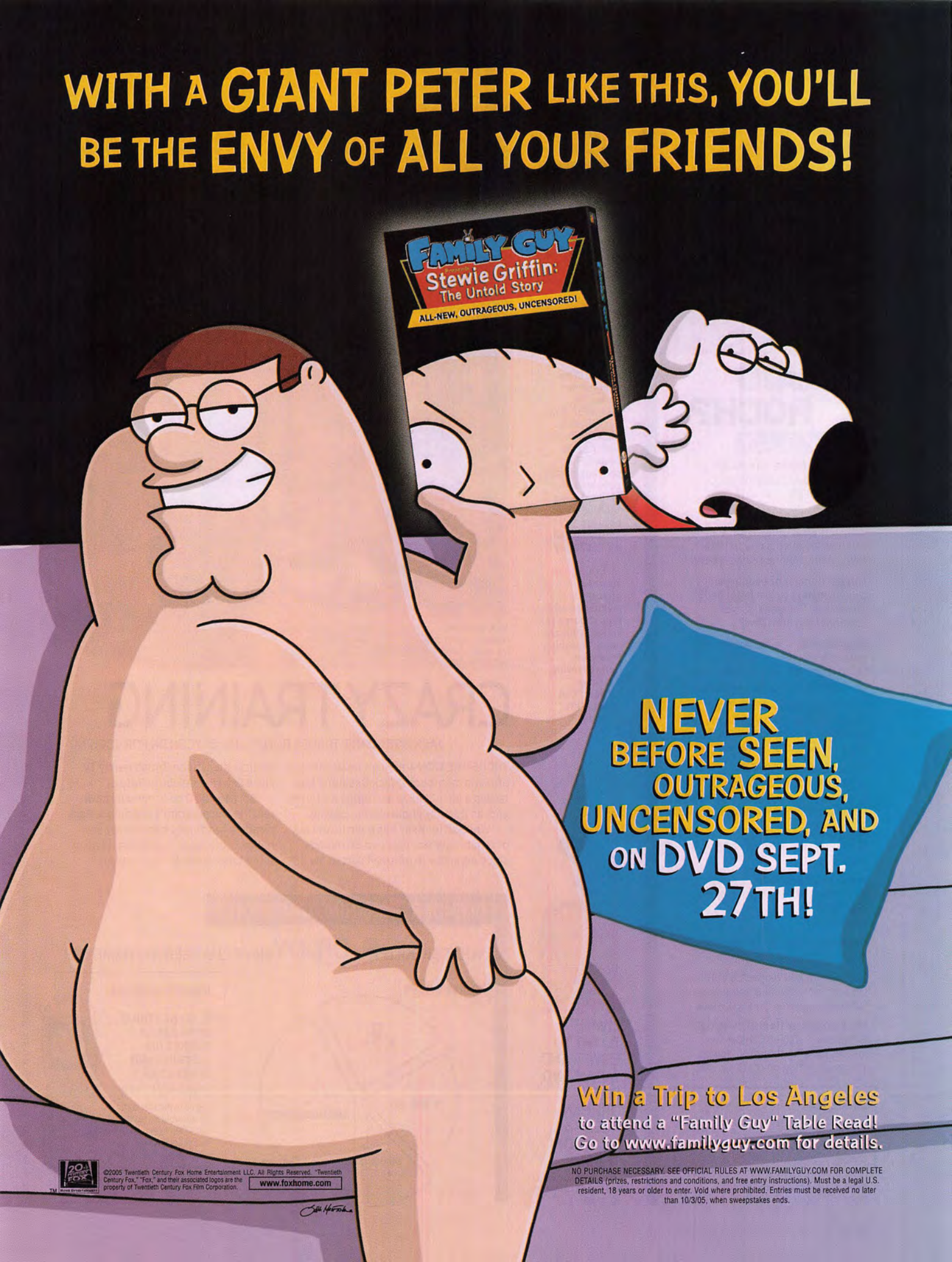
RAPPER YOUNG JEEZY ♥ YAYO (SNOW) AND DIAMONDS (ICE)

IN HIS RAPS, the Atlanta MC Young Jeezy is known for gruff gangsta taunts, but his logo puts a distinctly comical spin on the phrase *cold-blooded*: It's a scowling snowman.

Jeezy calls himself "da Snowman" to boast possession of both diamonds and cocaine. "I'm iced out, plus I got snow, man," he raps on Gucci Mane's track "Icy." The 2-D logo is featured in ads promoting his major label debut, *Let's Get It*. Jeezy also plans to launch a clothing line called—what else?—Snowman. *NOEL BODDIE*

JAGGER: PAUL SCHMULBACH/GLOBE PHOTOS; SILENT DISCO: JESSICA BRUDER; SIMPSON: KEVIN MAZUR/WIREIMAGE.COM; ILLUSTRATION: GARY FRENCH

WITH A GIANT PETER LIKE THIS, YOU'LL BE THE ENVY OF ALL YOUR FRIENDS!



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to attend a "Family Guy" Table Read!
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Call him Frank Black, call him Black Francis ... just don't call him late for dinner.

DO YOU ROCH?

FRANK BLACK

DOES THE LEGENDARY PIXIES SINGER AND ACCLAIMED SOLO ARTIST INDEED ... ROCK?

→ **Ever trashed a hotel room?**
Yes, in the early days of the Pixies. But it was a such a cheap hotel I don't think anyone really noticed.

Largest number of people you've woken up next to in a hotel bed?
Three: Joey [Santiago], Dave [Lovering] and Kim [Deal].

Biggest celeb's home you've ever gotten drunk in?
David Thomas from Pere Ubu—literally—he is indeed quite a large guy.

Ever had a brush with the law?
The Border Patrol stopped me twice leaving Mexico. Once for marijuana, once for suspicion of marijuana.

Worst tour horror story?
On the last Frank Black and the Catholics tour, the bus crashed twice because the driver was a psychopath!

Thing you most regret?
Kicking a guitar at Kim onstage in the early '90s.

Worst place you've been sick?
A fly-infested truck stop in Italy with diarrhea oozing out of me every five minutes.

Stupidest thing you've ever eaten?
Magic mushrooms at Graceland.

Last person you wanted to kill?
On a recent Pixies tour, there was a fan backstage who wouldn't leave.

Most expensive item of clothing?
Eiffel Tower–shaped Gaultier sunglasses for a few hundred dollars. I ended up sitting on them. *DAVE HILL*

VERDICT

BETWEEN TRIPPING AT GRACELAND AND INTRA-BAND GUITAR-THROWING, FRANK BLACK TAKES ROCKING TO A WHOLE NEW LEVEL!!!

FRANK BLACK'S ALBUM *HONEYCOMB* (BACK PORCH/EMI) IS OUT NOW.

NEWS ROUNDUP

DAVID LEE ROTH has been auditioned by Infinity Broadcasting as a replacement for the departing **HOWARD STERN**.

MARILYN MANSON is turning his attention to making art films. A series of shorts, titled *Phantasmagoria: The Visions of Lewis Carroll*, will be released on his website this winter. The shock-rock star calls his style of filmmaking "horripilation" because "it's horrifying and it's depilatory."

BILLY CORGAN stormed offstage in Melbourne after fans shouted for songs by his old band, Smashing Pumpkins. Before leaving, the singer replied: "Can I live my life for today?"

WORD!

"I WANT TO GO TO EGYPT AND JAPAN AND OPEN ORPHANAGES—A CHAIN OF THEM."

LINDSAY LOHAN, WHO HAS NOT YET STARTED TO DO SO

Jack Osbourne: "Must ... resist ... ice cream cart!"

CRAZY TRAINING

JACK OSBOURNE TRADES BOOZE AND OXYCONTIN FOR JOGGING

THOUGH HE WON America's heart with his afro and man-boobs, Jack Osbourne has traded a life of booze and drugs for tai chi and, as this July photo shows, jogging.

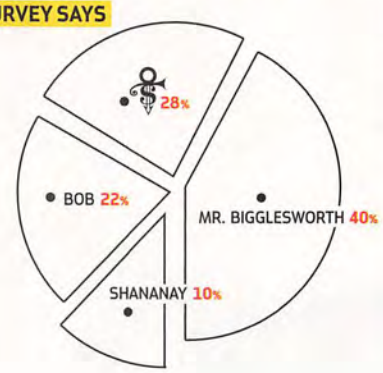
While sister Kelly has been in and out of rehab, Jack has dropped 30 pounds since April, due in no small part to his participation in the British reality TV show *Extreme Celebrity Detox*.

So, how did Ozzy's demon spawn react to the program's regimen? "Rock climbing has totally become my new hobby," Jack says. "I go at least two or three times a week." *STEVE KANDELL*

BLENDER'S BURNING QUESTION

WHAT SHOULD **P. DIDDY** HAVE CHANGED HIS NAME TO?

SURVEY SAYS



READER WISDOM

"[illegible], SO HE COULD MORE EASILY MARKET HIS CLOTHING AND OTHER CRAP."
JASON MAYCAN, TOKYO

Log on to Blender.com for November's "BURNING QUESTION." One deserving reader will have his or her comment published in the next issue and win this **MOTOROLA V551**.

BLACK: TIM HALE/RETNA LTD.; OSBOURNE: X17AGENCY.COM; LOHAN: LAWRENCE LUCIER/FILMMAGIC.COM/ILLUSTRATION BY GARY FRENCH

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SINCE 1913

USEFUL TIPS FROM THE STARS

HOW TO ...

DO A BACK FLIP!

Rapper **DAVID BANNER** shows you how to unleash your inner cheerleader, without breaking your neck

BY STEVE KANDELL
PHOTOGRAPHY BY LEGO

1

BE BORED

"Growing up in Mississippi, we didn't have parks to play in, so we taught ourselves how to do back flips for our own entertainment. I first learned when I was 5 and now, at 31, I still do them during my shows. We would land on our heads all the time, but making mistakes is important—that's how you get better."

2

BE NIMBLE

"Go barefoot and practice on grass. Start with your knees bent. As you jump up and backwards, throw your hands over your head to catch yourself. Try to throw yourself back, as opposed to vertically. Really throw yourself over. The lower you crouch, the more you spring back up."

3

BE BRAVE

"People panic and think too much, which makes them stiffen up. A lot of it's just trusting that your body will do what it's supposed to do and that your hands will catch you. If you throw a baby into water, he'll figure out how to swim. You'll know mid-air if you are high enough and you'll naturally make adjustments."

4

BE DRAMATIC

"If you do fall, you'll land on your head, not your neck—I still fall all the time, I've got so many injuries I feel like the fucking Tin Man. Ideally, land with your knees bent, and for a finishing touch, wave a middle finger in the air. Don't worry about form—you're not trying to win the Olympics."

CERTIFIED (SRC/UNIVERSAL) IS OUT NOW.

SHIRT AND PANTS BY **ADIDAS**

 "Don't you like to groove in your hooptie on your old flip, flop, sweatshoes."

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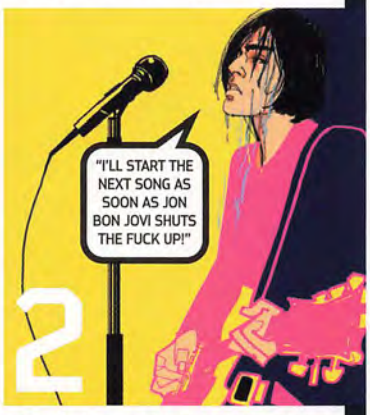
EMOPHOBIC!

Indie-rock wacko **ANTON NEWCOMBE** of Brian Jonestown Massacre picks a fight with Dashboard Confessional's Chris Carrabba at Lollapalooza

→When the Brian Jonestown Massacre performed at Lollapalooza in July, singer and *Dig!* star Anton Newcombe was unhappy to find Dashboard Confessional playing at the same time, across the field.



→The day's scorching-hot temperatures did little to improve the mood of Newcombe, who continued to insult the emo poster boys.

→But it was when Dashboard's keening singalongs actually threatened to drown out BJM's retro-jams that Newcombe got really nasty.

NEWS ROUNDUP

The makeup artist who accused SNOOP DOGG and his entourage of drugging and raping her backstage at the *Jimmy Kimmel Live* show has dropped her lawsuit. "The matter has been resolved amicably," she said.

BRITNEY SPEARS has booked a ceremonial Kabbalah blessing for her baby at the controversial group's L.A. headquarters.

While visiting London, KATE MOSS's concerned former boyfriend JOHNNY DEPP reportedly advised her new boyfriend Pete Doherty on taming his wild behavior. "He took him aside for a one-to-one," a source claimed.

WORD!

"GLITTER WAS AHEAD OF ITS TIME."

MARIAH CAREY

Trés Sheik

MICHAEL JACKSON STILL WEIRD AFTER CHILD-MOLESTATION TRIAL

MICHAEL JACKSON—seen here carrying either daughter Paris or son Prince Michael under a thick blanket—has celebrated his acquittal on child-molestation charges by reportedly purchasing a palace in the Middle Eastern nation of Bahrain. After his court victory, the pop star visited the oil-rich Gulf state and liked the anonymity he experienced.

His new home is surrounded by 14 acres of land and borders the estate of the king's son Sheik Abdullah bin Hamad al Khalifa. In January it was announced the prince would collaborate on a charity single to promote world peace with Jackson's brother Jermaine. *STEVE LOWE*

WEIRD BAND ALERT

THE RADIOACTIVE CHICKEN HEADS

EIGHT SO-CAL ADULTS WEAR CARTOON COSTUMES. PLUCKY!

Slipknot's new masks kind of sucked.

A BAND OF RADIOACTIVE CHICKENS?
Well, let's not ignore the radioactive carrot, radish and tomato. But yes, the garage-gothabilly band is made up of "genetically modified farm experiments" between the ages of 14 and 28.

SO, A SATIRE ON MODERN FOOD SCIENCE?
Vaguely. The half-human and half-fowl/veggie mutants do mid-set battle with arch-nemesis Chuck E. Cheese, the pizza chain's mouse mascot.

FINE, BUT WHAT ARE THE LIVE SHOWS LIKE?
Steamy! "It's so hot under those stage lights, we get flashbacks of our days in the incubator," admits guitarist Bird Brain, 17, who moonlights as a fashion model. *STEVE LOWE*

JACKSON: RAMEY PHOTO; CHICKEN HEADS: COURTESY RADIOACTIVE CHICKEN HEADS; CAREY: GREGORY PACE/FILMMAGIC.COM/ILLUSTRATION BY GARY FRENCH; CARTOON: JOHN JAY

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ALMOST FAMOUS

HIM

FINLAND'S DEVILISH DOOM-ROCKERS MAKE AN AMERICAN DEBUT, THANKS TO BAM MARGERA

BY JOSH EELLS
PHOTOGRAPHY BY TURE LILLEGRAVEN

"NOT BAD, HUH?" asks Ville Valo, lead singer for gothic Finnish metalheads HIM, as he surveys his swank Hollywood hotel room. A striking 28-year-old who peppers his thickly accented English with slang like "back in the day," Valo is getting some rest before heading out to shoot his band's first American music video. "Everything is looking sexy at the moment," he grins.

Of course, anything's an improvement when you're from a cold, desolate country the locals call *jumalan selän takana*—"behind God's back." HIM (pronounced "hymn") spent most of the last 10 years languishing in Scandinavian obscurity, making four regionally popular albums and not seeing the sun for months at a time. "We just got drunk every night," Valo says. "Finns are all miserable fuckers."

But when *Jackass* star Bam Margera heard the quintet—which also includes one-namers Mige (bass), Linde (guitar), Burton (keyboards) and Gas (drums)—while in Helsinki for a skateboarding tour, he made it his mission to break them in the States. Margera got three HIM tattoos and plastered their logo on his board, and soon his Hot Topic–shopping fans snatched up enough of their import CDs to get them signed to a U.S. deal. The band's first American record, *Dark Light*, dropped in September.

HIM—which stands for His Infernal Majesty—specialize in mixing gloom and glam, a good-meets-evil blend summed up by the title to their 1997 debut: *Greatest Love Songs Vol. 666*. "We call it 'love metal,'" Valo says. "It means we're not afraid to throw punches, but we'd rather give you a kiss."

And despite all the Satanic allusions, Valo insists they don't actually worship the man downstairs. "It's never been my cup of tea," he says. "I know loads of people who are into the dark arts, but I'd rather find my own way—somewhere between heaven and hell."

OUTNOW *DARK LIGHT* SIRE

"FINNS ARE ALL MISERABLE F@%*ERS."

ALL ABOUT US!

FIRST ALBUM EVER BOUGHT
Animalize by Kiss (Valo)

WON'T TOUR WITHOUT
A shotgun, Prozac and a positive attitude (Mige)

WORST PRE-ROCK-STAR JOB
Carrying stuff for people who acted like rock stars (Mige)

OBSESSIONS
Body armor, Kabbalah, the theory of evolution, Paris Hilton's vagina (Mige)

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POP STAR MUST-HAVE

MUSCLES

SOMETIMES MALE POP STARS PICK UP WOMEN ... LITERALLY!

WHITNEY AND BOBBY

CAMERON AND JUSTIN

ENRIQUE AND ANNA

NEWS ROUNDUP

Plans are underway for an all-star RICK JAMES tribute concert coinciding with the release of a new album containing material the funk star was working on when he died in August 2004.

America Online and Warner Music Group are co-producing an online reality series called *THE BIZ*, in which contestants vie to be president of a newly created record label. AOL will stream the first episodes in mid-October.

A military band tunic owned by JOHN LENNON has been sold at auction for $175,000. The tunic, which Lennon wore in a *Life* magazine spread in 1966, has been credited with inspiring the Beatles uniforms on the cover of 1967's *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*.

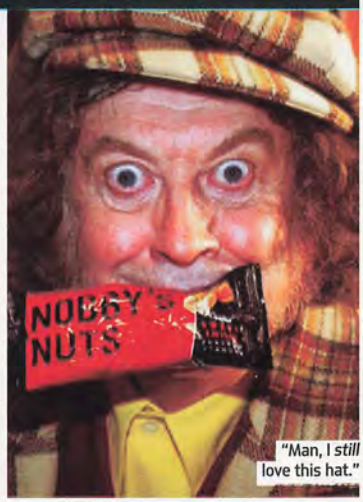
WORD!

"I'D RATHER BE SEEN AS A 'GOOD GIRL' THAN WITH COKE IN MY NOSE."

HILARY DUFF

LIFE AFTER ROCK

"Man, I love this hat."



"Man, I *still* love this hat."

NODDY HOLDER

THEN

GUITARIST, VOCALIST, SONGWRITER
SLADE, 1966–1991

"WE WERE PLAYING live for five years before we had a hit in 1971 with 'Get Down and Get With It,' a song Little Richard made famous. After that, me and [bassplayer-violinist] Jim Lea churned out the hits. We wrote "Coz I Luv You" in 15 minutes! With six No. 1s in Britain and hits all over Asia and Europe, we were spearheading the '70s Glam Rock movement, a good-time, audience-participation band. Of course, it was always a party on the road."

NOW

ACTOR/RADIO PERSONALITY
CHESHIRE, ENGLAND

"ABOUT 1986, I thought the band was getting stale. We'd been on the merry-go-round for 20 years, and I was being offered acting and radio jobs. I had a radio show in Manchester that lasted 15 years, appeared in numerous commercials and on quiz shows, and played a music teacher in the TV series *The Grimleys*. It says 'entertainer' on my passport, and that's how I've always seen myself. Variety gets the adrenalin flowing." *AS TOLD TO GAVIN MARTIN*

OOPS!

RICKY MARTIN GETS POLITICAL, MAKES ANTI-SEMITIC BLUNDER

POP STAR RICKY MARTIN has pledged to change negative stereotypes of Arab youths in the West.

"I come from Latin America, and in some countries we are considered 'losers,' 'drug traffickers,'" said Martin while attending the Arab Children's Congress in Jordan in July. "That is not fair because that is generalizing." The Puerto Rican hipshaker promised to be the youngsters' ally. "We have to educate the ignorant—you have me here as a friend," he said.

Posing with Arab fans, the "She Bangs" singer donned a Palestinian kaffiyeh scarf, which read in Arabic "Jerusalem is ours," along with a graphic of Israel and the disputed territory.

Ricky Martin: "Oy vey!"

Later discovering his blunder, Martin recanted the scarf's symbolism. "I had no idea that [the kaffiyeh] contained language referring to Jerusalem," he said. "I apologize to anyone who might think I was endorsing its message."

NOEL BODDIE

HOLDER: COURTESY OF NODDY HOLDER; MARTIN: KHALIL MAZRAAWI/AFP/GETTY IMAGES; DUFF: WIREIMAGE.COM/
ILLUSTRATION BY GARY FRENCH; BROWN: LFI; TIMBERLAKE: X17 AGENCY.COM; KOURNIKOVA: X17 AGENCY.COM

 "You drive me crazy, I just can't sleep/I'm so excited, I'm in too deep."

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Brinkman (above) gets ready to kill some guy (below).

OLDE SCHOOL

A CANADIAN RAPPER GOES BACK—WAY BACK—FOR MEDIEVAL INSPIRATION

A CANADIAN RAPPER has translated into hip-hop some of the best-known works of fourteenth-century poet Geoffrey Chaucer.

Baba Brinkman, 26, refashioned the archaic Middle English of high school curriculum staple *The Canterbury Tales*—namely, the Pardoner's Tale, Miller's Tale and Wife of Bath's Tale—into rhyme schemes and updated slang "young people would like." Last spring, Brinkman performed "The Rap Canterbury Tales" to more than 1,600 students across England.

The Canuck MC believes a modern adaptation isn't such a stretch, since the themes of rap music and the medieval tales have many surprising commonalities.

"Jealousy, anger, greed, lust … the themes are the same. The Miller's Tale especially has a lot of references to genitalia." *NOEL BODDIE*

WHAT'S IN FRED'S HEAD?

"Growth is our only guide to finding out who we really are."

A RANDOM THOUGHT TAKEN FROM FRED DURST'S BLOG

NEWS ROUNDUP

Former Evanescence guitarist **BEN MOODY** has credited Avril Lavigne with encouraging him to start a solo career. "She was just like, 'You're going to do a record, and that's that!' I didn't want to argue with her," he said of his recent songwriting partner.

CHRISTINA AGUILERA has hired French designer Christian Lacroix to design a dress for her wedding to music executive Jordan Bratman this winter.

Darkness frontman **JUSTIN HAWKINS** has revealed that relations in the band were recently so strained that he considered quitting.

WORD!

"SHAKIRA WOULD NEVER MARRY A BACKUP DANCER."

SHAKIRA ON COMPARISONS TO BRITNEY SPEARS

t.A.T.u.: would rather be ice fishing.

IN THE STUDIO

"WE'RE NOT GOING TO SAY!"

What can t.A.T.u. tell us about their (non-lesbian) album? Uh, nothing.

"NYET," SNAPS JULIA Volkova, the brunette half of petulant Russian pop duo t.A.T.u. "No. We're not going to say."

She's talking—or rather refusing to talk—about *Dangerous and Moving*, the follow-up to their gold-selling 2002 debut. Apparently, it's too complex for words, so the girls—who sparked controversy by making out on MTV in Catholic-schoolgirl uniforms, professing to be lovers—are keeping mum.

They've since parted with svengali Ivan Shapovalov, the child psychologist turned producer who was the brain behind t.A.T.u.'s salacious marketing strategy. They've also dropped the lesbian bit (Volkova, 20, had a baby with her boyfriend last fall), though judging by the don't-fuck-with-us chill of colossal single "All About Us," they're still BFFs.

Their new independence, they say, inspired a new work ethic in the studio. "We did it mostly ourselves," says redhead Lena Katina, 20.

So they wrote the songs? "No."

Played the instruments? "No."

Produced the album? "Um … no."

The pair has been recording in L.A. for nearly six months, which seems like a lot considering all they're doing is singing. "Well, some days we lie on the beach taking sunbaths," explains Katina.

Pressed for details on the record, Katina frowns. "It's difficult. If you really want to get into it, you could spend hours talking about this album." That seems like a long time, so instead we ask—delicately—what she thinks of critics who say t.A.T.u. are a one-time phenomenon unlikely to repeat their success. "Frankly speaking," she scowls, "I don't give a shit." *JOSH EELLS*

ALL ABOUT OUR RECORD

ARTIST
t.A.T.u.

PRODUCER
Martin Kierszenbaum

STUDIO
Village Studios, Los Angeles

LAST ALBUM
200 km/h in the Wrong Lane, 2002

NEW ALBUM
Dangerous and Moving, October 2005

ALSO IN THE STUDIO

Former boy-bander **JC CHASEZ** is recording the follow-up to his 2004 solo debut, *Schizophrenic*, at the Church in New York City with producer David Maurice.

Prolific metalheads **MINISTRY** are recording *Rio Grande Blood: The True Story of Faith, Family & Flag* at 13th Planet Studios in El Paso, Texas.

Spastic rockers **THE VINES** are in an undisclosed studio in Australia recording the follow-up to 2004's poor-performing *Winning Days*, due early 2006.

Emo heartthrobs **DASHBOARD CONFESSIONAL** have tapped U2 producer Daniel Lanois for the follow-up to 2003's *A Mark, a Mission, a Brand, a Scar.*

BRINKMAN: COURTESY BABA BRINKMAN; T.A.T.U.: WILLIAM HAMES; SHAKIRA: LALO YASEY/WIREIMAGE.COM; ILLUSTRATION BY GARY FRENCH; DURST: STEVE GRANITZ/WIREIMAGE.COM

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Paul Stanley: "Ooh, half-price toilet paper!"

JUST LIKE US

PAUL STANLEY OF KISS GOES TO THE MARKET

KISS FRONTMAN Paul Stanley left his costume and cosmetics at home on a recent trip to the grocery store. With a cart full of food, the unadorned singer went virtually unnoticed among the soccer moms shopping in the West Hollywood market.

In non-shopping news, the bubblegum-metal star has been collaborating with Swedish songwriter Andreas Carlsson (Def Leppard) and Desmond Child (Bon Jovi, Aerosmith) on his first solo record since 1978.

Posting on the Kiss website, Stanley talked about the music. "[It] is consistent without compromise," he said. "It's exactly who I am now and what I want to be doing. It's got elements of everything I've done plus a leap into the 21st century."

NOEL BODDIE

OBITS

IBRAHIM FERRER, 78, August 6, in Havana, Cuba, of multiple organ failure. Cuban jazz musician lifted from obscurity after being showcased as one of the leading voices in Wim Wender's 1999 film *Buena Vista Social Club*. Ferrer had started his career in Pacho Alonso's band in the '50s, though hard times led him to find work shining shoes before his career was resurrected decades later.

EUGENE RECORD, 64, July 22, of cancer. Lead tenor of the Chicago-soul vocal group the Chi-Lites, who had several '70s hits including "Have You Seen Her" and "Oh Girl." Beyoncé Knowles's Grammy-winning smash "Crazy in Love" samples "Are You My Woman? (Tell Me So)" a tune Record wrote.

HOLY GUACAMOLE!

BECK PLAYS SURPRISE TACO RESTAURANT GIG, UPSETS MARIACHI

ARMED WITH THE ability to play rap, funk, tropicalia and neo-folk music—and a passable knowledge of the Spanish language—Beck popped into a San Francisco taqueria with his guitar and put on a guerilla gig.

Uninvited and unannounced, the genre-hopping Latinophile walked into Mexican restaurant Pancho Villa and performed a 45-minute acoustic set.

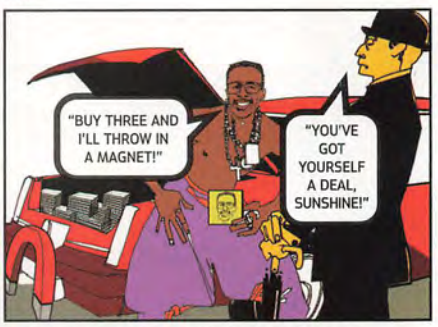
According to one eyewitness, who took the above photo, most of the customers neither recognized nor paid attention to the performing superstar. The regular mariachi, surprised and confused at having his gig stolen by the pint-sized gringo, was visibly upset. *STEVE KANDELL*

POP HISTORY

1976 TO PRESENT // ROCK STARS SHIFT UNITS IN STARBUCKS ... AND BEYOND

→ Bob Dylan's decision to sell his *Live at the Gaslight 1962* CD exclusively at Starbucks is not the first time music has been distributed at a non-traditional outlet.

→ In 1976, art-rock avatar Brian Eno exclusively sold his CD *Songs That Make Me Much Cleverer Than You* at a magnet shop in the town of Troon, England.



→ And who could forget MC Hammer's post-bankruptcy ploy of exclusively selling *Hey, Where'd All the Money Go, Yo?* out of the trunk of his car?

WRITTEN BY CLARK COLLIS // ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN JAY

STANLEY: SPLASH NEWS; BECK: JASON MAXHAM

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KOOL

BE TRUE.

20 SONGS YOU SHOULD DOWNLOAD THIS MONTH

1 BECK
"FUNKY LIL' SONG" *EENIE MEENIE*
Charmingly slipshod blues about upside-down houses and upbeat attitudes.

2 THE (INTERNATIONAL) NOISE CONSPIRACY
"BLACK MASK" *AMERICAN*
Swedish agit-punks hammer out this ode to an anarchist's favorite accessory.

3 GRANDADDY
"PULL THE CURTAINS" *V2*
Electro-ornamented power-pop about crawling into your bed and hiding from life.

4 GHOSTFACE AND RAEKWON
"STARKS & CHEF" *[MIXTAPE]*
Hysterical Wu-brothers reunite over a catchy, strangled electric guitar riff.

5 WE ARE SCIENTISTS
"NOBODY MOVE, NOBODY GET HURT " *VIRGIN*
These California newbies serve up a punkish new wave jam about … being a gigolo?

6 COHEED AND CAMBRIA
"WELCOME HOME" *EQUAL VISION/COLUMBIA*
Incendiary, multi-movement prog-metal about being really, really pissed at your parents and an ex-girl-friend—or maybe an elf.

7 BLOOD ON THE WALL
"MARY SUSAN" *THE SOCIAL REGISTRY*
Up-and-coming New York noise trio offsets an ambling, Pixies-indebted bass groove with screaming punk crescendos.

8 FRANK SINATRA FEAT. NOTORIOUS B.I.G.
"NASTY BOY/FOR EVERY MAN THERE'S A WOMAN" *[ONLINE]*
Ol' Blue Eyes and Biggie hit the town looking for ho's on this DJ Cappel & Smitty blend.

9 TONY YAYO FEAT. 50 CENT
"SO SEDUCTIVE" *G UNIT/INTERSCOPE*
Curtis Jackson's high-voiced, oft-jailed Queens homey gets out of the bing and is very horny.

10 ROBIN THICKE
"WANNA LOVE YOU GIRL"
STAR TRAK/INTERSCOPE
Pharrell turns Alan Thicke's son into Justin 2.0 over a hushed beat.

11 ROLLING STONES
"BACK OF HAND" *VIRGIN*
Mick and mates ignore a combined age of 6,684 and come back rrrockin'!

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"KEVIN IS GAY" *KICKBALL*
Snotty-little-girl vocals lace a big, fat song positively drenched in guitar.

14 MORNINGWOOD
"NTH DEGREE" *CAPITOL*
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15 RYAN ADAMS
"WHAT SIN REPLACES LOVE" *LOST HIGHWAY*
The alt-country wünderbrat works up some spiteful, shivering blues.

16 J.R. WRITER
"THROW IT UP" *[MIXTAPE]*
A fierce Harlem rookie drops endless punch lines and lets off techno fireworks.

17 KACI BROWN
"UNBELIEVABLE" *INTERSCOPE*
With a monstrous hook, this rookie, piano-tickling teen balladeer makes like Vanessa Carlton cranked all the way up to 11.

18 DEATH CAB FOR CUTIE
"EARTH ANGEL" *SHOUT! FACTORY*
The 1955 crush jam, as remade by these Bellingham, Washington, indie-rock swooners.

19 ROLL DEEP
"WHEN I'M 'ERE (SCREWED N CHOPPED)" *[ONLINE]*
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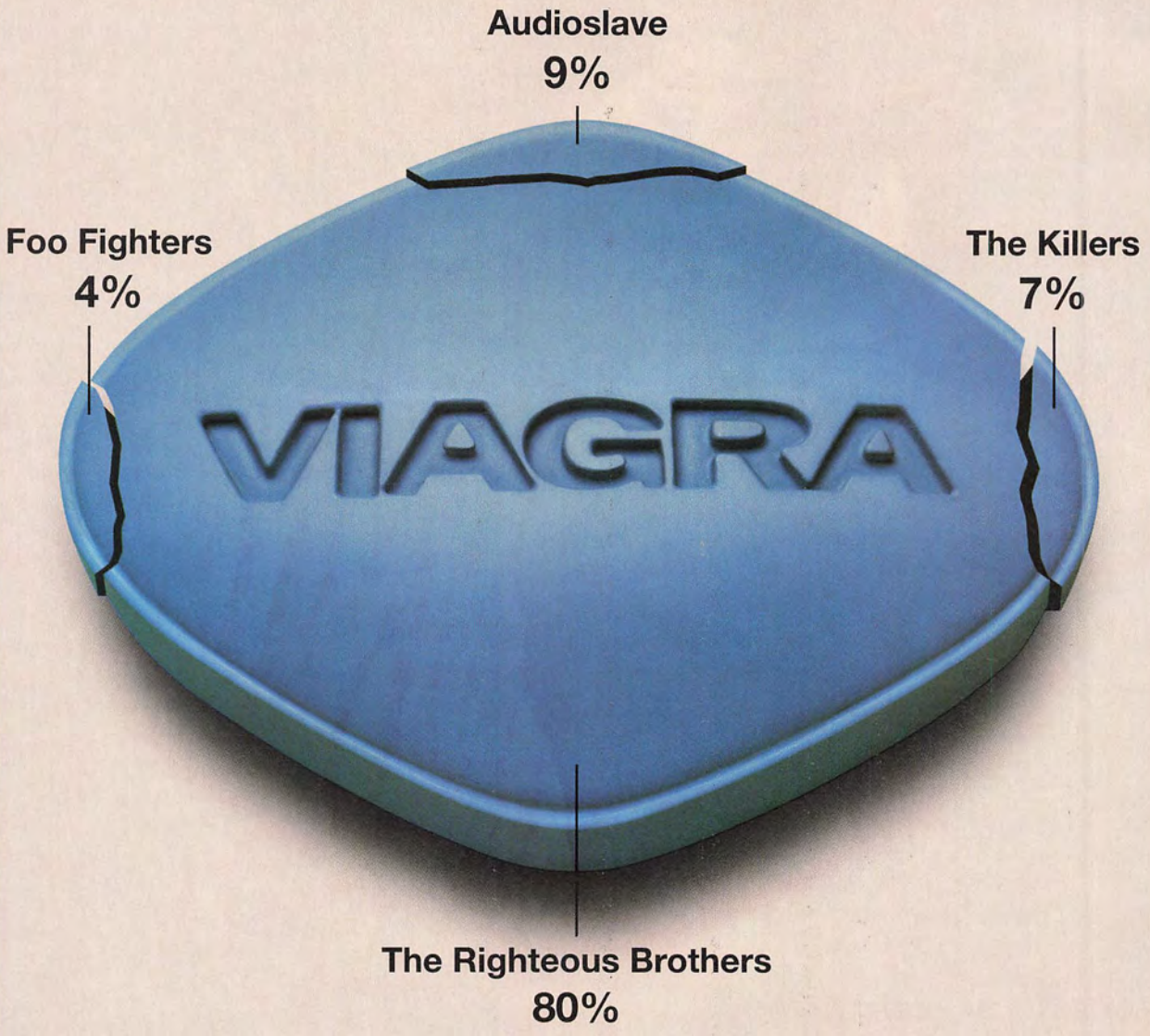

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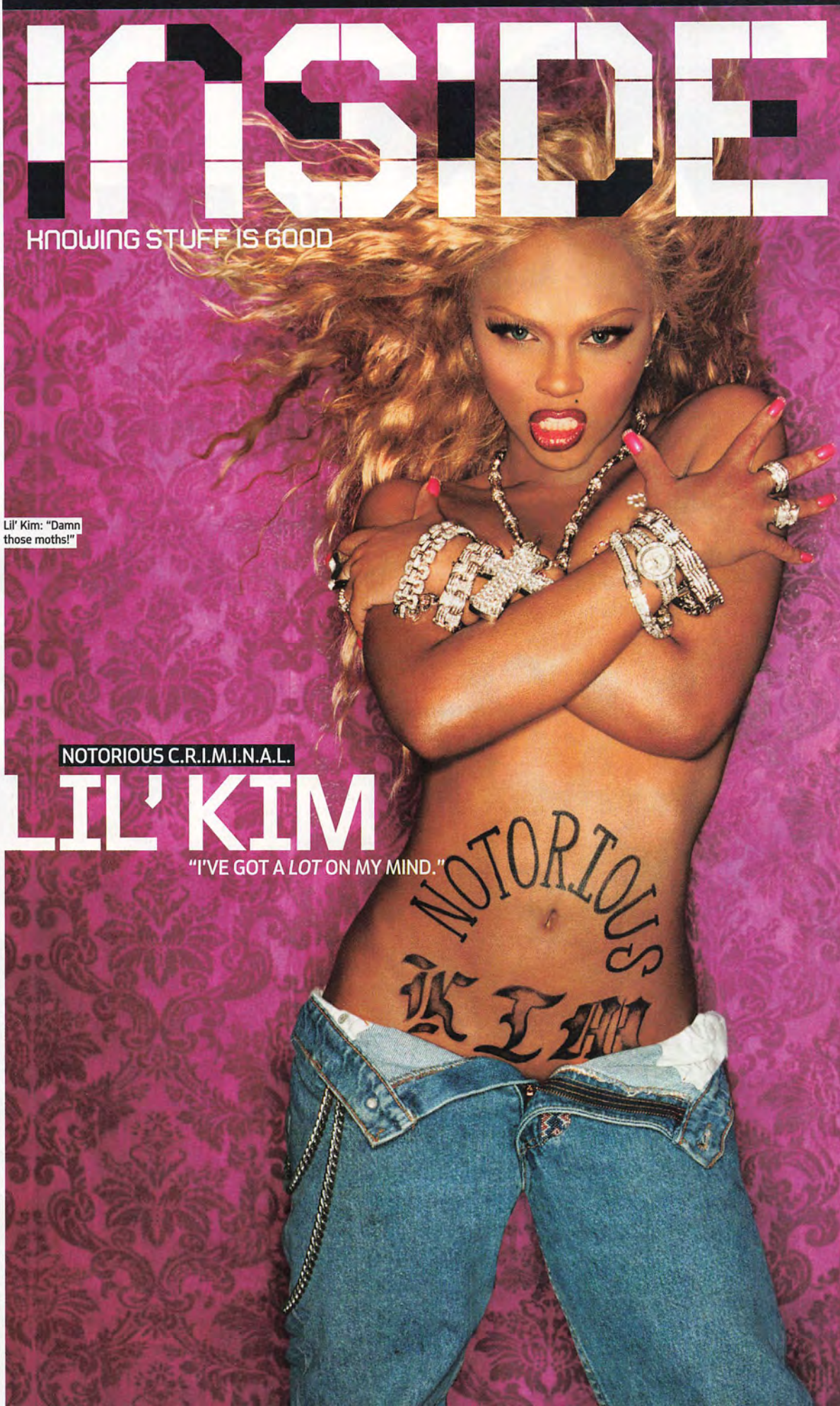

Lil' Kim: "Damn those moths!"

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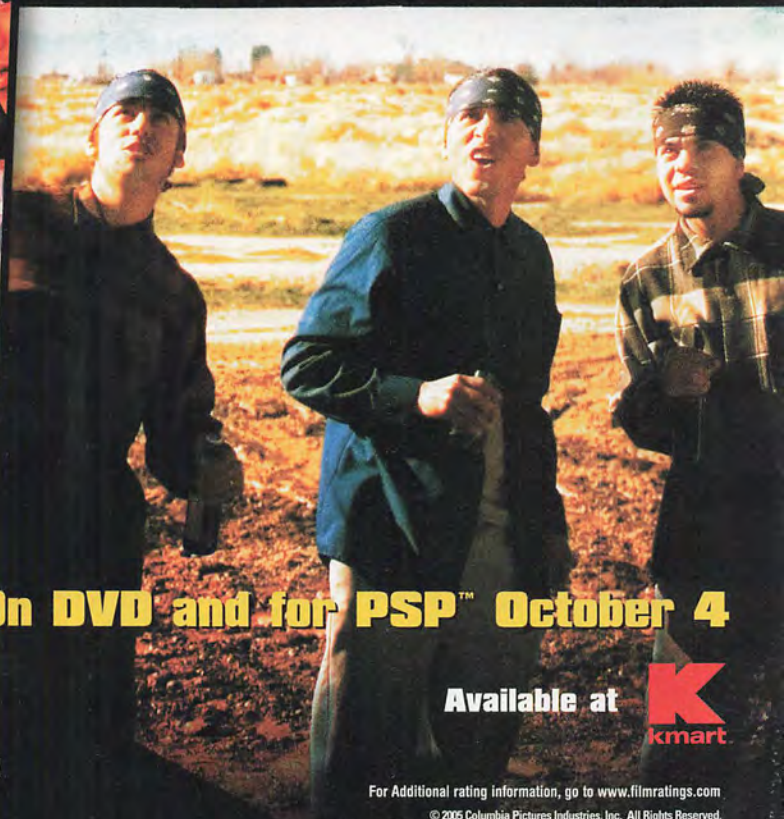
LIL' KIM

"I'VE GOT A *LOT* ON MY MIND."

DAVID LACHAPELLE/CONTOUR PHOTOS

"A BLAST FROM START TO FINISH!"

– A.O. Scott, *THE NEW YORK TIMES*



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COLUMBIA PICTURES

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OUR EXPERTS

NATHAN FOLLOWILL
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DALTON CONLEY
Professor of sociology, award-winning social scientist and author of *The Pecking Order: Which Siblings Succeed and Why.*

TAYLOR HANSON
22-year-old lead singer—and middle brother of three—in all-grown-up pop moppets Hanson. Their latest CD is *Underneath.*

La Toya Jackson: "Wait. *I'm* the embarrassing one?"

ROCK'S MOST EMBARRASSING SIBLINGS

ALCOHOLICS. HOOKERS. CRACKHEADS WITH IMAGINARY FRIENDS. IF YOU THINK ROCK STARS ARE WEIRD, THAT'S ONLY BECAUSE YOU HAVEN'T MET THEIR BROTHERS AND SISTERS BY BEN MITCHELL

POOL/REUTERS/NEWSCOM; FOLLOWILL: JAY BLAKESBURG/RETNA LTD.; CONLEY: STEPHEN HUDNER; HANSON: CLAUDIO BRESCIANI/SCANPIX/RETNA LTD.

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Leon Hendrix: "Hey Jack … John … Joe!"

"No pictures!" Prince, left, and Tyka, right.

JAILBIRD SIBLING

LEON HENDRIX

> WHO? JIMI's spirit-guided brother

> FAMILY TIES Jailed for stealing a fur coat, Leon was granted a temporary release to attend Jimi's funeral in 1970. After the late guitarist's estate passed to his illiterate gardener father, Al, his adopted daughter Janie allegedly persuaded him to cut Leon out and give her full control of the Hendrix legacy and fortune. Bequeathed a single gold record upon Al's death in 2003, Leon sued for a bigger cut, but was denied. Earlier this year Leon claimed a purple flame shot out of the sky and Jimi appeared to him in a vision saying "Come on, baby brother. It's time. You're ready"—after which Leon took up the guitar and started booking shows.

> EXPERT TESTIMONY "He's lucky to get the one gold disc," says Nathan Followill.

CRAZY-ASS SIBLING

TYKA NELSON

> WHO? PRINCE's ethereal sister

> FAMILY TIES Prince's younger sister was joined on interviews for her limp 1988 album *Royal Blue* by a large blue stuffed dinosaur called Jazz, which she kept on a leash and hugged; she also wore two watches—one set to "Marc Anthony time" in deference to an imaginary boyfriend, not J. Lo's future husband—and had such an aversion to light that she covered her windows with aluminum foil. Fifteen years later, in an interview with *The National Enquirer*, she admitted to having been a crack addict who sold her body to buy food for her two sons, Sir and President.

> EXPERT TESTIMONY "When the young sibling is trying to capitalize on the older sibling's success, that can make the more successful one uncomfortable," says Dalton Conley.

HIPPIE SIBLING

GEOFF DWIGHT

> WHO? ELTON JOHN's layabout half-brother

> FAMILY TIES In contrast to Elton's life of Marie-Antoinette-costumed fabulosity, half-brother Geoff is a hard-up eccentric with a petty-criminal past. Geoff, 38, lives in a small house in Wales—but for a while relocated to a shack in the garden so he could rent out the main property. Geoff's interests include Eastern religions and making Celtic harps. He's only met Elton—20 years his senior—three times, but claims he lost what respect he had for him when John failed to attend their father Stanley's funeral: "In the end, I think it came down to money. My dad was never impressed, while Elton was obsessed by it."

> EXPERT TESTIMONY "If you're coming from a working-class family and discover that you're gay, you tend to go in search of a new life," says Conley.

PLAYMATE SIBLING

LA TOYA JACKSON

> WHO? MICHAEL's impressionable sister

> FAMILY TIES The 49-year-old Jackson sister enjoyed moderate success as a solo artist until, in 1987, she struck out from the family—and the real trouble began. After she posed naked—with a snake—in *Playboy*, her new manager Jack Gordon realized her tabloid moneymaking potential. She did a *Playboy* video, wrote a salacious autobiography, made claims of child abuse against both her father and Michael, married Gordon, and endorsed a Psychic Friends hotline. Since her 1996 divorce, La Toya has been welcomed back into fold by the Jackson family.

> EXPERT TESTIMONY "La Toya was going to be fucked up no matter what," says Followill. "Maybe she did all that to take the heat off Michael. Apparently, it didn't work …"

ARE YOU AN EMBARRASSING ROCK-STAR SIBLING?

DON'T BOTHER CHECKING YOUR FAMILY TREE—JUST TAKE THIS SIMPLE QUIZ INSTEAD!

1 WHAT ARE DOING TONIGHT?

a) Playing a stadium show.

b) Watching your famous sibling—whom you do not resent in any way—play a stadium show.

c) Scalping the All Access backstage passes your brother gave you on condition that you wouldn't scalp them.

2 WHAT PET NAME DID YOUR FATHER HAVE FOR YOU?

a) "My little rock star."

b) "My little honors student."

c) "You there!"

3 WHAT WAS THE LAST MAGAZINE YOU APPEARED IN?

a) *Blender.*

b) You do not get asked to appear in magazines, a fact you do not resent in any way.

c) The "Celebrity Sibling" edition of *Big Butt.*

4 WILL YOUR BROTHER BE ATTENDING YOUR FORTHCOMING NUPTIALS?

a) No, you still haven't forgiven him for shooting up during mom's funeral.

b) Yes, because although he's famous, you do not resent him in any way.

c) Maybe—his "people" haven't got back to you about that yet.

IF YOU ANSWERED:

MOSTLY A'S: You're a rock star!

MOSTLY B'S: You're a rock-star sibling who does not resent the fame of your sibling in any way.

MOSTLY C'S: You are an embarrassing rock-star sibling. See, your parents were right—they should have stopped at one kid. *CLARK COLLIS*

LEON HENDRIX: FRANCES M. ROBERTS/PHOTOGRAPHER SHOWCASE/NEWSCOM; JIMI HENDRIX: TERENCE DONOVAN/CAMERA PRESS/RETNA LTD.; PRINCE AND TYKA: COURTESY OF TYKA NELSON/ZUMA PRESS/NEWSCOM; PRINCE: ANDY EARL/NETNAUK; ILLUSTRATION: JON JAY

Liam and Paul Gallagher return from robbing an optician.

Midori: "How did you know I'm a porn star?"

Martin Ciccone: "*Shanghai Surprise*? I loved it!"

CASH-IN SIBLING

PAUL GALLAGHER

> WHO? OASIS duo's shiftless brother

> FAMILY TIES The oldest Gallagher was dealt a cruel genetic hand, combining the looks of Noel with Liam's intellect. As Oasis's career took off in the mid-'90s, Paul landed a short-lived job as a talent scout at his brothers' record company and became a face on the London party scene—although he still lived with his mother. In 1996 he wrote *Brothers: From Childhood to Oasis*, a flattering bio that included the introductory explanation, "To all the people who see this book and think, Oh, look, Mr. Paul Anthony Gallagher is cashing in on his brothers' fame, yes, you are right, and I'm spending every penny to buy myself some self esteem." Last seen in the British press riding a bus under the headline NO DOUGH-ASIS!

> EXPERT TESTIMONY "I think anybody would be unhappy with someone who took advantage of something you've done for their own gain," says Taylor Hanson. "No matter who it was."

CRAZY NYMPHO SIBLING

MIDORI

> WHO? JODY WATLEY's porn-star sister

> FAMILY TIES Clubland diva Jody's kid sister, following a brief role in the 1988 Eddie Murphy movie *Coming to America*, changed her name from Michele to Midori and took parts in such adult fare as *United Colors of Ass* and *Sex Hungry Butthole Sluts*. Dated Kid Rock in 1999, discovered she was pregnant after they'd broken up and decided not to have the baby. "She was a great fucker, but a complete psycho," explained Rock before moving on to reliable girl-next-door type Pamela Anderson. Eagle-eyed fans can spot Midori among a trio of half-naked girls pleasuring Andrew Dice Clay on the cover of the Dice Man's 2000 album, *Face Down, Ass Up*.

> EXPERT TESTIMONY "It would be kind of weird knowing every one of your buddies had touched themselves to your sister," says Followill. "But that's not as embarrassing as having a *brother* that's a porn star."

BOOZY SIBLING

MARTIN CICCONE

> WHO? MADONNA's DUI-prone older brother

> FAMILY TIES When the alcoholic Ciccone was arrested for drinking and driving for the third time in 1994, Madonna took a "tough love" approach and left Martin to fend for himself financially. Without bail money to hand, he spent three months in a Michigan jail; afterwards he launched a spectacularly unsuccessful rap career as MC Ciccone with the album *Judgment Day*, the lyrics of which featured both anti-Madonna material and some vivid descriptions of non-consensual prison loving. In 2000 he complained that he wasn't invited to Madonna's wedding to director Guy Ritchie—even though at the time he was undergoing rehab at her expense.

> EXPERT TESTIMONY "There's a cost to having a successful sibling," says Conley. "You might pursue unwise strategies to replicate that sibling's success—for example, in the music industry—even if that isn't your talent."

MOST EMBARRASSING ROCK SIBLING EVER!

Alison Carey Scott: "Hey, at least I didn't make *Glitter*."

ALISON CAREY SCOTT

> WHO? MARIAH CAREY's hooker sister

> FAMILY TIES Pregnant at 15, Mariah's elder sister dropped out of school and turned to prostitution to support her drug habit. Alison has been arrested twice this year—the second time for reportedly offering sex to an undercover police officer in Long Island. The HIV-positive mother of four has insisted that she turned tricks to enable Mariah—whom she describes as a "heartless multimillionaire"—to travel to her early gigs by limo. A bridesmaid at Mariah's doomed 1993 marriage to label boss Tommy Mottola, Alison is said to have inherited $1 million when the girls' father, a successful engineer, died in 2002. Allegedly, fast living soon ate up this fortune, hence the return to hooking for up to $300 a pop.

> EXPERT TESTIMONY "That's the saddest story I've ever heard in my life, I do believe," says Followill. "She needs to go to church."

HOMICIDAL SIBLING

C-MURDER

> WHO? MASTER P's incarcerated brother

> FAMILY TIES This hip-hop also-ran changed his name back to Corey Miller earlier this year, claiming that C-Murder literally referred to his having witnessed a lot of homicides rather than committing any himself. This decision was made while Miller was being held at Louisiana's Jefferson Parish jail for the fatal shooting of a 16-year-old aspiring rapper. He also faced charges of attempting to kill a man at a Baton Rouge nightclub in 2001. C-Murder angered authorities by filming a video while behind bars, and his lawyer was banned from bringing him pens in case he used them to smuggle lyrics. Master P believes in his brother's innocence, though he warns youngsters not to flirt with thug chic to look tough: "Hopefully this teaches kids that you can't live that type of life no more," said the *No Limit* mogul, who was charged along with his other brother, Silkk the Shocker, for carrying unregistered, loaded firearms earlier this year.

> EXPERT TESTIMONY "Family are the people you can never completely push away," says Hanson. "But when you talk about murder, a clear line has pretty much been drawn, no question about that." [BLENDER]

GALLAGHERS: SUMA PRESS/NEWSCOM; MIDORI: SCOOP SYNDICATION; ALISON CAREY SCOTT: SPLASH NEWS; MARIAH CAREY: LAWRENCE LUCIER/FILMMAGIC.COM

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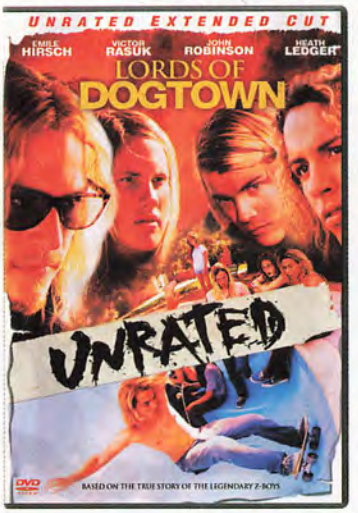

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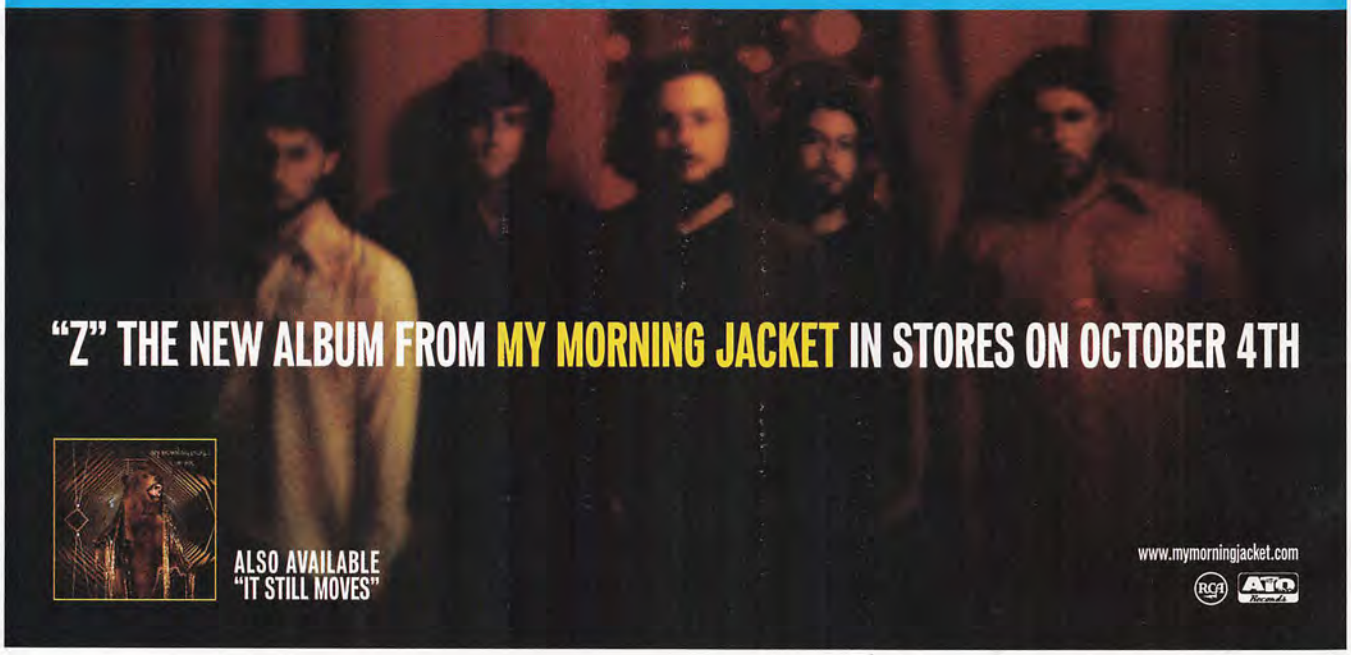

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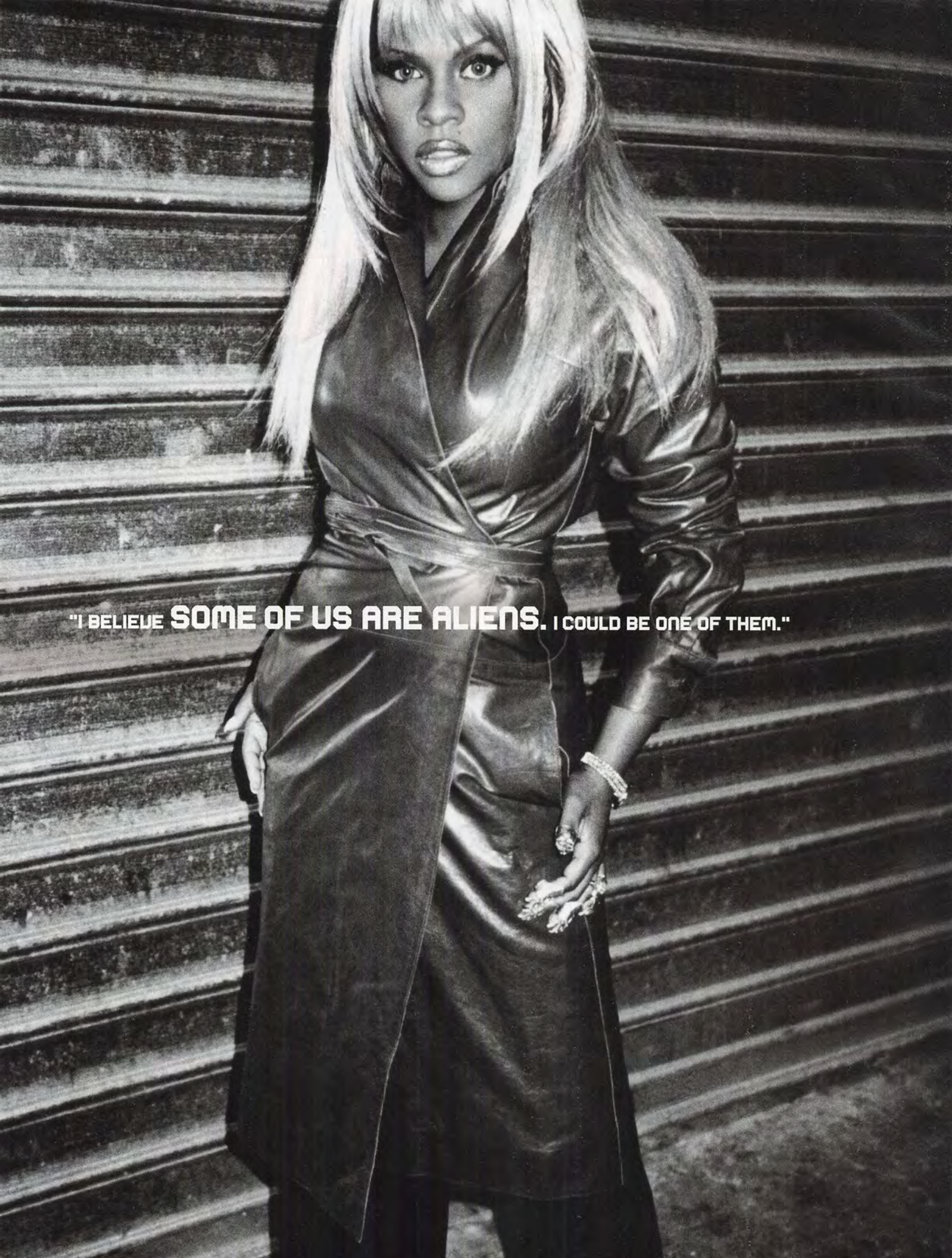
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Dear Superstar

YOU SEND QUESTIONS, WE GET ANSWERS. WHO LOVES YA, BABY?

IN ONE OF HER FINAL INTERVIEWS BEFORE GOING TO PRISON, THE PINT-SIZED HIP-HOP MONARCH TACKLED YOUR QUESTIONS ON BIGGIE, HATERS AND WHETHER JAILBIRDS CAN STILL BE GOOD ROLE MODELS // BY CLARK COLLIS

LIL' KIM

"I REMEMBER PUFFY told me years ago I work really well under pressure," says hip-hop scandal magnet Lil' Kim, plumped on a sofa in a Manhattan studio complex. "I work really well when I have a lot on my mind."

If that's the case, then the onetime protégée and girlfriend of late rap icon Biggie Smalls must have been working extremely well of late. For, just a couple of weeks from now, the 30-year-old—real name Kimberly Jones—is due to exchange her designer duds for a prison uniform and begin serving a 366-day jail term for perjury and conspiracy. That conviction resulted from false testimony she gave to a grand jury about an incident in which members of her entourage fired on rap rivals Capone-N-Noreaga outside the New York radio station Hot 97 in February 2001.

Today, Kim is, unsurprisingly, not superenthusiastic to discuss her trial or her forthcoming incarceration. She also largely demurs on the subject of her fondness for plastic surgery—although the rapper's bra-and-barely-there-shirt outfit does nothing to conceal ample evidence of that particular penchant. Such coyness is less evident on Kim's new album, *Naked Truth*, and, in particular, the single "Shut Up," which finds her answering a Greek chorus of Lil'-haters ("I heard she dead broke!" "I heard she sniffin' coke!" "Why's she got bigger tits?") with the instruction that they should indeed shut up ("bitch!").

"I don't know why people spread rumors about me," sighs Kim. "That's a question no one can answer. I'm just fabulous."

And, for most of the *Blender* inquisition, she is just that—both in answering your questions and giving thanks for the many messages of support that arrived with them.

"Until the day I die, my fans will always be in my heart," she says. "No matter what I do."

MARC BAPTISTE/CORBIS OUTLINE

With P. Diddy: "Do you have Martha Stewart's number?"

A much "liller" Lil' Kim in 1996.

With her mom in 1997.

"NEXT TO GOD, MY MOM'S MY BEST FRIEND."

WHO WOULD YOU MOST LIKE TO SHUT UP?
LILSGUY79, ST. PAUL, MN

There's no specific person. Whoever's talking mess—just shut up! Even if I don't know them, even if they're not even talking about me, if I hear you talking about somebody else, and you don't know what you're talking about, just shut up! [*Nods at* Blender.] They could be talking about you! Next time someone's talking about you, tell them, shut up, bitch!

IS LIFE HARDER NOW THAT YOU'RE FAMOUS OR WAS IT HARDER GROWING UP IN BROOKLYN?
JRYAN03US, PASADENA, CA

It seems like it's harder now. 'Cuz, you know ... I was born and raised in Brooklyn, so I adapted to that environment and I learned how to survive. I learned how to be comfortable in it. And I love Brooklyn. The things that we used to do when we were young—we had fun. There wasn't a care or a worry in the world. Now ...

HOW HAS YOUR FAMILY BEEN HOLDING UP UNDER THE PRESSURE OF ALL YOUR TROUBLES?
MANA733, NEW YORK CITY

Everyone's great. Very supportive. My mom's been very supportive. We live together, you know. Next to God, she's my best friend.

DO YOU THINK YOUR STYLE HAS INFLUENCED OTHER FEMALE RAPPERS?
CASS7120, RENO, NV

Of course! Every time I turn on the television I see a piece of me in someone's video. Whether it's the old Kim or the new Kim, I think everyone always incorporates Lil' Kim somehow, someway, into their style. I feel good about it.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE POSSESSION?
HARDKNOCKGURL80, ALBANY, NY

My Bentley. I love cars. I'm a great driver. My father was a bus driver.

DO YOU THINK YOU WOULD STILL HAVE BECOME A RAPPER IF YOU HADN'T MET BIGGIE?
FAZER99, SAN LUIS OBISPO, CA

Maybe. I think my life was already well planned out. I think God already knew what my life was gonna be. If not, I might have been a stylist, a designer, an architect, a psychologist or an interior designer.

DO YOU THINK JUSTICE WILL EVER BE SERVED WITH BIGGIE'S MURDER?
2PAC7673, GREEN BAY, WI

Let's hope and pray. Honestly—me, myself—I'm a strong believer that when someone is murdered, you never really get to the bottom of it. Especially when almost a decade has come to pass and you still haven't found the killer. I feel you may never really get the person that pulled the trigger. I just want him to rest in peace.

WHAT'S THE STRANGEST GIFT YOU'VE EVER GOTTEN FROM A FAN?
JESPERTON, SEATTLE

Well, some man—I guess he was in love with me, or whatever—he sent me two dolls. A male doll and a female doll. And the female doll had on a wedding dress. And the male doll had on a tuxedo. His name was on the male doll and my name was on the female. That was weird.

IF I COULD ONLY SPEND ONE DAY IN BROOKLYN, WHAT SHOULD I DO?
HAWTHORNEHTS99, ARCATA, CA

There's so many things to do: Walk around the projects. Ha! Walk around the 'hood ... real quick. Go to the Brooklyn Museum, that's really nice. I like going to museums. I like going to the zoo. And we have a really great skating rink—that used to be my favorite when I was young.

WHAT'S THE WORST JOB YOU EVER HAD?
CHRISSY98, MORGANTOWN, WV

In Bloomingdale's. They really work you in a department store and people can be really unappreciative of your help. Shoppers don't have a lot of patience. And I know, because I'm one of those people! But I'm nice. I would never go into a department store and be mean.

WHAT'S THE BLINGIEST THING ABOUT YOUR HOUSE?
CAMRONLUV, FAIRFAX, VA

I have a Gucci couch. I've had it for years. And I have a Queen Bee fish tank. It's a fish tank that has all these Queen Bee symbols inside it.

ARE YOU AWARE THAT YOU'RE A GAY ICON?
MRJUDELAW, NORTHRIDGE, CA

Yes. But I don't like to just think of myself as only that. I don't like when people say 'Oh, just a gay icon,' because I feel like I'm loved by many and not just gay people. I love my gay fans. But I love all my fans.

WHAT WAS IT LIKE RECORDING "GET NAKED" WITH TOMMY LEE'S METHODS OF MAYHEM PROJECT?
SADIE LADYSIN, HAVEN, PA

We were all friends—Tommy Lee and Pamela Anderson. I would go out almost every weekend and go visit them and stuff. Tommy's cool. He's wild, though. But Pamela's my girl. I haven't seen her in a long time. She probably don't have my new number and I don't have hers. We used to do a lot of things with each other.

DESCRIBE A TYPICAL EVENING AT HOME WITH LIL' KIM.
DIDDY4EVA81077, CAMDEN, NJ

Just playing with my dog—when my dog was alive. My dog is dead. She just passed away two months ago. [*Blender*: Will you be getting another one?] Not now, not now. Maybe a little later ...

DO YOU BELIEVE IN UFOS?
CALLYCOMPTON, HERSHEY, PA

Yeah! I believe some of us are aliens. I could be one of them.

DO YOU HAVE ANY SURPRISING HOBBIES?
JANELLE1587, LARCHMONT, NY

I did some rock climbing. It wasn't on an actual mountain. It was the rock climbing thing at a gym, and I went all the way to the top. I didn't have any nails at that time. You can't have nails when you go rock climbing.

DO YOU THINK YOU'RE A GOOD ROLE MODEL?
MAGNUM07, NEWTOWN, PA

Yes. I mean, I would like to think so. I can't speak for everyone. There's no way everyone in the world is going to love you. You're not going to please everybody. I'm sure to my millions and millions of fans, more than half of them think that I am.

WHAT ARE YOU BAD AT?
MMBR4LIFE, DETROIT

Nothing. [BLENDER]

LEFT TO RIGHT: EVAN AGOSTINI/GETTY IMAGES; ANTHONY CUTAJAR/LFI; MONIQUE BUNN/RETNA LTD.

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INSIDER

Ask Blender

SOLVING POP CONUNDRUMS SINCE 2001

WHAT GIVES WITH THE GREEN DAY SONGS "STUCK WITH ME" AND "DO DA DA"? I HEARD THEY GOT THEIR NAMES SWITCHED.

VAN SVENNSON, ATLANTA, GA

That's almost right. Some fans have noted how the song "Stuck With Me," from 1995's *Insomniac,* contains no mention whatsoever of the title phrase, while B-side "Do Da Da" prominently features the words "Well now you're stuck with me."

The reason is simple: "Do Da Da" was originally called "Stuck With Me," but supposedly there was a mixup by a studio technician and another song was credited on the album sleeve as "Stuck With Me," meaning they were, er, stuck with it. When they eventually decided to release the real "Stuck With Me" as a B-side to "Brain Stew/Jaded" (it's now available on the *Shenanigans* B-sides compilation), they invented the nonsense title "Do Da Da." So now you see? It's simple!

I'M A BIG ADMIRER OF NINA SIMONE'S VERSION OF "MR. BOJANGLES"—WHO'S IT ABOUT?

CANDIDIA PHILLIPS, MOUNT VERNON, NY

According to the lyrics of this much-covered standard (the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band, Sammy Davis Jr., Robbie Williams), Mr. Bojangles is an elderly dancer whom the singer meets in a New Orleans jail and who tells his life story of traveling around Southern minstrel shows accompanied by his dog.

The song is almost straight reportage of an incident when country songwriter Jerry Jeff Walker was arrested following a murder in the city's French Quarter. In response, the police had rounded up some regular street characters and, to pass the time in the crowded jail, Walker recalled, "this old dancer-character in the cell decided that we should all tell stories and things about ourselves, and make the time go by."

Confusingly, the most famous Mr. Bojangles was no down-and-outer. Bill "Bojangles" Robinson was an influential tap-dancer who became one of the first black stars Hollywood produced, starring frequently alongside Shirley Temple. For his Harlem funeral in 1949, thousands of admirers lined the streets.

The figure that Walker met shared his nickname but not his fame. Temple complained about the song in 1998, saying: "It drives me up the wall since it's not about him at all. He was never a bum in jail. He was a classy guy."

WHERE DID THE KILLERS GET THEIR NAME? HAVE THEY ACTUALLY KILLED ANYONE?

JUAN DAVENTURO, VENTURA, CA

No—although it seems those boys in the Bravery had better watch their backs. There are many fine cultural artifacts that share a name with the world's new favorite '80s revivalists, like Ernest Hemingway's classic 1927 short story "The Killers," which was turned into an equally classic 1946 film noir starring Burt Lancaster and Ava Gardner in 1946. It was also the name of a gruesomely violent 1984 cult indie flick scripted by lowlife litterateur Charles Bukowski.

In fact, the Killers owe nothing to any of these things: They simply grabbed the name from the fictional band in the video for New Order's 2001 single "Crystal," directed by Sophie Muller. It turns out the Manchester band's bassist, Peter Hook, was a huge Killers fan before even realizing the connection. "I got the EP before I had even heard of that, and it never twigged," he said earlier this year. "I just thought it was a fantastic record."

Fittingly, Muller herself would end up directing the music video for the Killers' single "Mr. Brightside."

The Killers guest-host *The Price Is Right.*

WHICH BAND WAS THE FIRST TO HAVE A SPACESHIP ONSTAGE?

SAANIA RASIEJ, PORTLAND, ME

Spaceship stage sets came to prominence during—guess which decade? Yes, the 1970s! At this time, a handful of bands—including AOR giants Boston—had lighting rigs that emulated spacecrafts. But the British band Electric Light Orchestra went further; for their 1978 *Out of the Blue* tour, they unveiled a massive fiberglass spaceship from which the band would emerge—that is, if the hydraulics worked. The contraption bore a striking resemblance to *Spinal Tap*'s pod scene.

ELO were beaten by George Clinton's P-Funk Earth tour, which kicked off in October 1976 in New Orleans. To accompany *Mothership Connection*, the funk genius drafted set-design guru Jules Fisher (Kiss, the Rolling Stones) to create a spaceship that descended onto the stage. Costing $275,000, it was constructed in an airport hangar in Upstate New York. The reasoning behind this extravagance? Clinton later shrugged: "Who could ever conceive of a nigger in a spaceship?"

HOW LONG DID BRIAN WILSON REALLY SPEND IN BED?

KAMAL AL-FARIQ, NEW YORK CITY

It's part of the Brian Wilson myth that the Beach Boys' resident genius didn't leave his bed for several years. Many sources put his time of seclusion at four years (1971 to 1975). Brian himself identifies the period as between the summer of 1973 and late 1975—from the point when his father, Murry, died to when controversial psychiatrist Eugene Landy started treating him. He was certainly in a terrible state during that period—massively overweight and hearing voices in his head. But, even then, he was never a total recluse. After all, part of his daily routine often involved visiting the house of close friend Danny Hutton to do coke. [BLENDER]

YOUR QUESTIONS

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FRANZ FERDINAND ACROSS AMERICA

SEXUAL AMBIGUITY: CHECK. SONGS ABOUT ROCK-STAR GIRLFRIENDS: SURE. MIDGET SERVANTS: TOTALLY. THE SUAVE DANCE-ROCKERS OF FRANZ FERDINAND RETURN TO PROVE THAT THEY MAY HAVE FLASH, BUT THEY'RE NO FLASH IN THE PAN

BY BRIAN RAFTERY // PHOTOGRAPHY BY GUZMAN

THEY ARE HARD to miss, these fans of Franz Ferdinand. Mulling about an abandoned street in downtown New York City during a late-July heat wave, they're the short-skirted, raccoon-eyed, au courant clotheshorses taking a break from working as extras in the band's "Do You Want To" video. It's a task that involves standing around a giant studio and holding glasses of fake champagne, and they've brought along all kinds of lookie-loos. Not the most glamorous way to kill an afternoon, but hey, the pizza's free, and the cellphone pictures will look *totally* awesome on their blogs.

Meanwhile, the band members themselves —singer-guitarist Alex Kapranos, 33; drummer Paul Thomson, 30; bassist Bob Hardy, 25; and guitarist Nick McCarthy, 30—are over in the corner, dressed in matching Japanese satin-styled jackets, working through their coordinated dance strut with a choreographer. Just a few days ago, they were picking out wardrobe designs and wondering aloud about the possibility of procuring some "babies and dwarves" for the set (there are no infants in sight, but there is a small-statured waiter wielding some fake bubbly in the corner).

On-set dance instructors? Midget servants? Franz Ferdinand may be four book-smart guys with art-school tastes, but even they find it hard to resist the lure of a decadent, high-gloss video shoot—especially now that they've got the success to back it up. Since the release of last year's *Franz Ferdinand*, they've become one of the most successful upstart bands in the land. They're name-checked by Snoop Dogg and covered by the Kidz Bop kids. Frat boys dig them, as do Grammy organizers. In fact, they are now the fourth-most famous Franz of all time, bested only by an Austrian archduke, the author of *The Metamorphosis* and a fictional weightlifter from *Saturday Night Live*.

All of this has happened awfully fast for Franz Ferdinand, who have gone from rehearsing in a freezing cold jail-turned-practice-space in Glasgow to having a private sit-down with Kanye West in Rome ("He said he liked our stuff," relays McCarthy, "because we put hips back into music"). It's a strange series of →

Franz Ferdinand, clockwise from left: Paul Thomson, Bob Hardy, Nick McCarthy and Alex Kapranos.

STYLIST: MARK ANTHONY FOR ESP; GROOMING: PATRICIA MORALES FOR JED ROOT

events for four blokes with zippy suits and sexually vague lyrics: What started with an independently released EP in 2002 has morphed into a big-label deal (with Sony) and an eagerly desired new album, *You Could Have It So Much Better ... With Franz Ferdinand*. Even they find it a little weird.

"The strangest moment was when we won the Mercury Prize," says Kapranos, referring to the prestigious English music award. "We were flying to New York, and they showed a little snippet of the news before the flight. I remember looking around this big jumbo jet, and everybody had a picture of Bob on their screens. And Bob was sitting beside me." He pauses and crinkles his face. "I didn't know what was real anymore."

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THERE ARE TWO widely held misconceptions about Franz Ferdinand, and the first one pops up because they wrote a rather intense tune about two men dancing with each other ("Michael") and because they own some really fetching blazers. "I have a lot of friends in the U.S. who aren't familiar with their music," says friend Ana Matronic of the Scissor Sisters, who had a BBC hit with their lounge cover of Franz's breakthrough single "Take Me Out." "But they've heard 'Michael' and are like, 'Oh yeah—they're gay, aren't they?'"

Nope—both McCarthy and Thomson are married, Hardy is single and Kapranos is currently dating Eleanor Friedberger of the Fiery Furnaces.

The other constant rumor is that they're of full Scottish blood, which probably keeps springing up because, well, they're always talking about Scotland. In fact, only Thomson was born in Scotland; everyone else came from England, though they'd all eventually meet up in Glasgow. Their adopted homeland has a rich but often ignored musical history, especially in the early '80s, when wiry postpunkers like Josef K and Orange Juice combined white-soul vocals with crisp guitar lines.

"There were all of these bands that played this incredible music—the Monochrome Set, the Fire Engines—but never got big, which is this strange twist of fate," says Kapranos, whose artfully matted hair and thoughtful expressions give him the aura of a man who has initiated many a late-night absinthe-bar coversation. "I always thought we were going to be a band like that."

That's hard to believe, especially since Franz have such a keen ear for what makes the white kids dance. We Yanks may have ignored the Scot-rock boom of the early '80s, but Kapranos and Co. were paying attention, updating that spiky, tense vibe with a thumping rhythm section.

Scottish swimwear still has a long way to go.

"If it weren't for 'Take Me Out,' I don't think as many American kids would be interested in British rock," says Ross Millard of the Futureheads, who toured with Franz and are one of several U.K. bands—including Bloc Party, Maxïmo Park and the Kaiser Chiefs—to find a stateside audience in the past year. "Britpop was all about being smart in a mod-ish way, and it got lost in translation, whereas Franz Ferdinand's image is very classic—it draws upon a lot of European references, and that's exotic to people."

Plus, Franz are some wee sexy bastards: Kapranos is slim and trim, with a noggin that looks almost too big for his body; Hardy is rosy-cheeked and quick to grin, like a child star from the '30s; Thomson has brooding character-actor cheekbones; and McCarthy, as Matronic points out, "looks and acts just like Kyle MacLachlan in *Twin Peaks*." They are polite as all get-out, and they're sort of like *The Lord of the Rings* cast minus the pointy-ear prosthetics—pasty and compact and seemingly always together. Their style takes all things historically European-looking (cardigans, sharp-pressed suit jackets, long wool coats) and mashes them together with a punk-rock flair. It's been the source of much discussion among fashion-mag editors, doe-eyed female fans and the band members themselves.

"There's nothing worse than when some band comes on the telly looking really bad," says Kapranos. "But I don't think we would spend an hour in a conference call discussing hair products," he adds.

"No, we'd do that in person," jokes Hardy.

And yet their passion for fashion wasn't the only reason they took off in the U.S.; if that's all it took, Jamiroquai would still be prancing around. While most British bands work one territory at a time—often saving the U.S. for last—Franz Ferdinand opted for a multilateral approach, jetting from one continent to the next, always coming back to a city a little bit bigger than they were when they left (and a lot better, too, with a gotta-see-them-now live rep). Along the way, they developed an affinity for the States, and Franz is probably one of the few bands to name-check Denver as one of their favorite tour stops.

"I didn't know what Denver was like—all I knew was the guy who sang 'Country Roads,'" says Kapranos.

"There's the altitude, too," Hardy says, "so if you have two drinks, you're ridiculous. The whole crowd's happy all the time."

Not always. "We were at this radio festival," says Hardy, "and when we were playing 'Michael,' there were these butch jock guys dancing in the back. And then one of them stopped and said, 'This song's about a DUDE!'"

As the audiences got more enlightened, the band started to outgrow its hipster fan base. They helped open the Grammy Awards, playing with the Black Eyed Peas and Gwen Stefani. ("We were standing between Hulk Hogan and James Brown," says McCarthy, "and they just looked like plastic.") And they even found themselves aboard the Cure's private jet. ➜

ALEX: SUIT, SHIRT & BOOTS BY **DIOR** PAUL: SUIT BY **DIOR**, SHIRT BY **J. LINDEBERG** BOB: SUIT BY **J. LINDEBERG**, SHIRT & BOOTS BY **DIOR** NICK: SHIRT BY **CALVIN KLEIN**, TROUSERS BY **J. LINDEBERG**

"THERE'S NOTHING WORSE THAN WHEN SOME BAND COMES
ON THE TELLY LOOKING REALLY BAD."

"Everybody was hungover," recalls Kapranos. "It was the day after the MTV Europe Awards and we'd all been out. Robert Smith didn't get any sleep. His hair was messy and he hadn't put his makeup on straight. He wore his sunglasses all the time. That's a real rock star, isn't it?"

For all of the band's determination to conquer the world the old-fashioned way, they had more help than they knew: This summer, it was announced that the Epic Records promotion department had provided a radio DJ with a $4,000 trip to Miami in exchange for some spins of "Take Me Out," and that another radio-station employee was willing to "whore" himself out for more free Franz schwag. The band even became a punch line on *The Daily Show* ("Usually if you ask a whore to give you the 'Franz Ferdinand,' you get something else entirely," Jon Stewart cracked).

"Your immediate reaction is, 'Oh my god, how embarrassing,'" says Kapranos. "And that fades when you realize it's not just you [under investigation]. It doesn't mean that the situation's any less appalling. [But] everybody at the label has worse things to deal with. Like Michael Jackson."

• • • • •

YOU WILL FIND none of these experiences, however, on *You Could*. Instead of turning in a "fame is some crazy shit"–themed second album, they've retained the two elements that helped make Franz Ferdinand sell more than three million copies worldwide: Sex, and the suggestion of more sex. Heck, the first single, "Do You Want To"—which Kapranos based on a particularly scandalous evening of party-chatter eavesdropping—has a suggestive chorus that could make even Prince drop his 28-inch-waist drawers: "Do you want to go/ To the place I've never let you go before?"

Maybe *Blender* just has a dirty mind, but is it correct to interpret "Do You Want To" as being about some particularly naughty sex?

"Oh, certainly!" Kapranos beams. He's a fan of winking lyrics, the kind delivered with a smirk, not a smile. "Crude isn't particularly sexy. If somebody walks up to you n a bar and says, 'Hey, I'd like to copulate,' you'd probably be like"—he makes a scrunched-up face of disgust. "The tension that precedes it—the *suggestiveness*—is the most fun part of sex."

You Could was recorded about an hour's drive from Glasgow, in a country house the band purchased last year. "In the back of your head, you have all these romantic ideas of getting away—like the Band on *Big Pink*," says Kapranos.

When the band wasn't doing the dishes or going for bike rides, they were listening to each other's record collections, with producer Rich Costey (Bloc Party, Doves) helping to open their ears a bit: "He played us a lot of Pink Floyd," says Kapranos. "We hadn't listened to a lot of Pink Floyd before. We thought they were the enemy." And while there are no drawn-out organ solos, several of the songs on *You Could* have a distinctly Brian Eno–Lou Reed sound, particularly the lovely tune "Eleanor," about a beautiful girl flying away to Coney Island. (Kapranos gets a bit bashful when asked whether it's about his girlfriend. "It's about a girl named Eleanor," he allows. "Have to keep up mystique and all that.")

The trickiest part came after recording. Though only one member of the band has an actual art-education background—Hardy was a painter, something he doesn't have much time for anymore—all of the Franz four have an interest in design, paying special attention to record sleeves. Initially, *You Could* was supposed to be again titled *Franz Ferdinand* and feature very similar art as their first album. It was a dim idea, but they'll admit they've had a few of them: "We were going to call the band Franz Ferdinand 2000," says Kapranos. This was in 2002.

Kapranos may bristle when it's suggested that *Franz Ferdinand* is half band, half art project, but their love of both high and low culture—ranging from Russian constructivist art to Amerie—is obvious in the care they take in presenting themselves, working on each CD-single sleeve and show poster with equal fervor.

"It's kind of like in *Spinal Tap*," says Hardy. "Drawing things on a napkin, like, 'Wouldn't this be great?' And two minutes later, someone's making it for you."

"When you're a kid and you draw imaginary album covers for your imaginary bands—that's the exciting part of being in a band," Kapranos says, adopting a childlike igrin. "We're probably the least professional band, because we don't see it as a job. Sometimes I feel like we're kids playing in a band." [BLENDER]

SCOT OR NOT?

Are these famous celebrities really from the land of Franz Ferdinand? Or are they just hoax Highlanders?

1 JAMES DOOHAN
The late Doohan spent most of his career playing *Star Trek*'s chief engineer Montgomery "Scotty" Scott who, while he couldn't change the laws of physics, did always enunciate his inability to do so in a Scottish accent.

2 AC/DC
Has a rock group ever been more associated with Australia than Angus Young's metal muthas? No. But when recording their 1978 album *If You Want Blood You've Got It*, they encored wearing the Scottish football uniform. Also, had a bagpipe solo in "It's a Long Way to the Top (If You Wanna Rock 'N' Roll)."

3 ROD STEWART
Another fan of Scottish football, the rocker even managed to mention his favorite team, Celtic FC, in the lyrics of "You're in My Heart (The Final Acclaim)," ostensibly a love song about actress girlfriend Britt Ekland. Also wrote Scotland's 1978 soccer World Cup theme song.

Rod Stewart: In fact, we *don't* think you're particularly sexy.

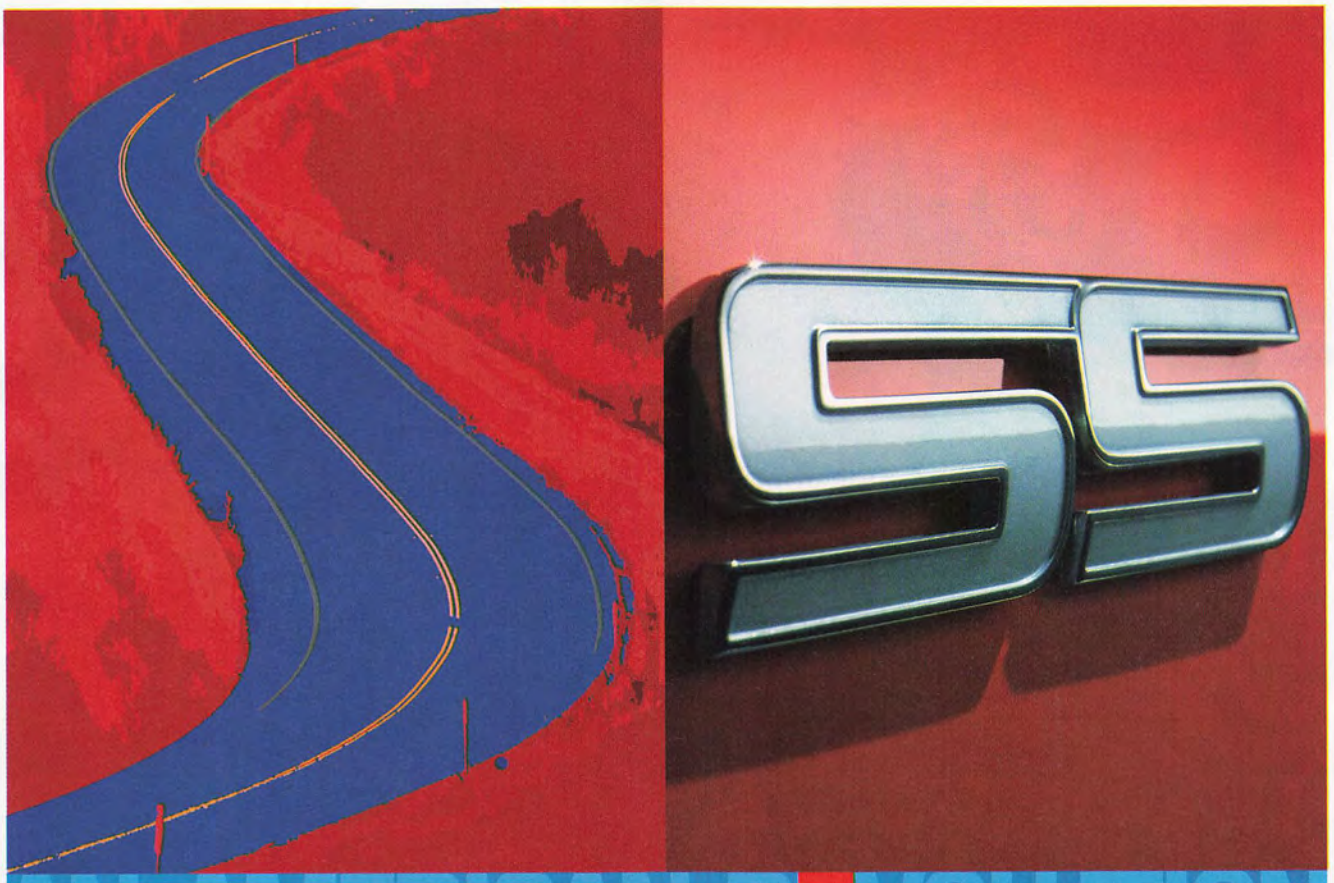
4 MIKE MYERS
One of his characters on *SNL* was the Scottish proprietor of a shop called All Things Scottish (Catchphrase: "If it's not Scottish, it's crap!"). Later played the Scottish Fat Bastard in the *Austin Powers* movies as well as voicing fellow big-boned haggis-muncher Shrek.

5 MARY, QUEEN OF SCOTS
Something of a slam-dunk you might think. Except for the fact that, in addition to being ruler of Scotland, the sixteenth-century monarch—real name Mary Stuart—was also queen of France! So, was she Scottish—or was she nottish? *CLARK COLLIS*

ANSWERS: DOOHAN: NOT (CANADIAN); **AC/DC:** SCOTT (BON SCOTT, ANGUS AND HIS BROTHER MALCOLM WERE ALL BORN IN SCOTLAND); **STEWART:** SORT OF (BORN IN LONDON, FATHER WAS FROM SCOTLAND); **MYERS:** NOT (ALSO CANADIAN); **MARY:** SCOTT (BUT SPENT ALMOST ENTIRE CHILDHOOD IN FRANCE).

Franz at the Grammys, 2005: "Raise your hand if you love haggis!"

STEWART: M. GILFEATHER/REX USA; FRANZ: KEVIN MAZUR/WIREIMAGE.COM



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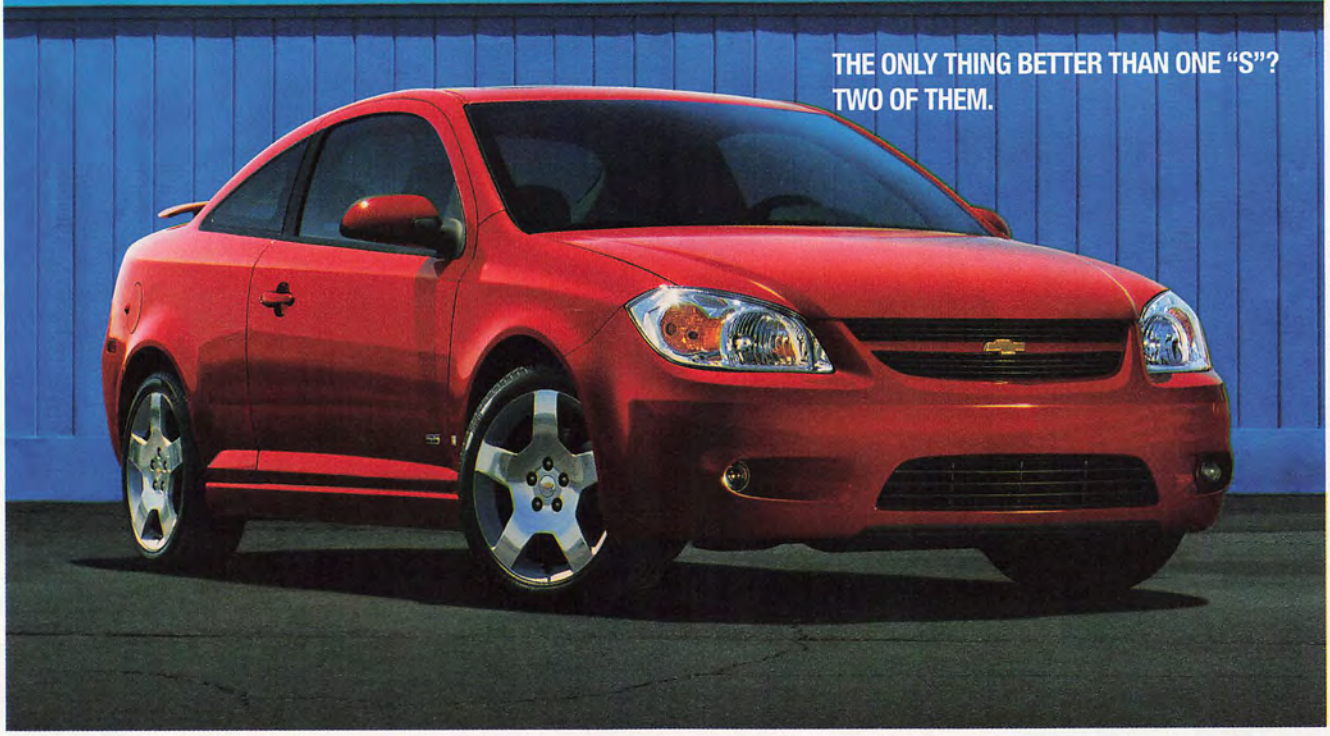

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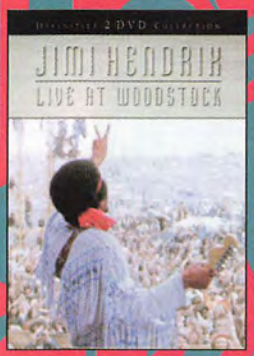

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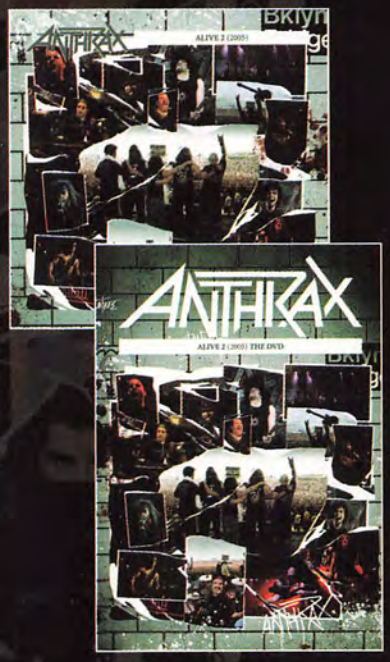

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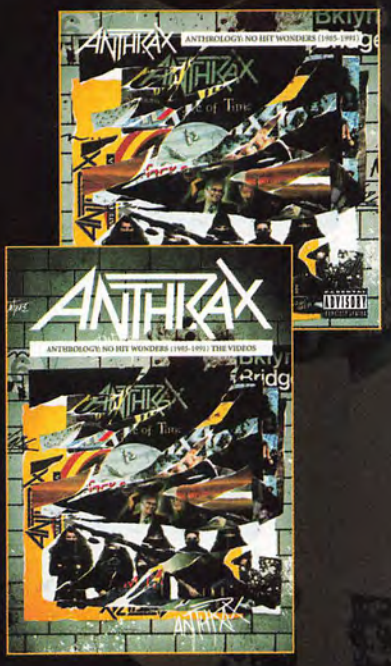

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THERE ARE PEOPLE who will tell you that all the best rock songs come from the 1960s and '70s, the Golden Age of Genius-Level Hall of Fame Rock Immortals. These people are called baby-boomers, and they're the same people who are bankrupting Social Security and invented the male ponytail.

Blender has never bought the myth that rock & roll declined at middle age; the last 25 years were as good as the 25 before them, unless you somehow think Eminem and U2 aren't as Genius Level as the Moody Blues and Captain & Tennille. So we've constructed an alternate rock history that begins long after Woodstock stopped smelling bad and the Sex Pistols quit with dignity, a list of the 500 greatest songs since 1980. And believe us, it was hard to stop at only 500. Sometimes, the good ol' days were yesterday and today.

LIME FOTO

[1982]

1 BILLIE JEAN

MICHAEL JACKSON

STUDIO QUIBBLES. THE MTV COLOR LINE. A ROLLS-ROYCE ENGULFED IN FLAMES. NOTHING COULD STOP MICHAEL JACKSON'S PARANOID FUNK ASSAULT FROM TAKING OVER THE WORLD. BY JODY ROSEN

ONCE UPON A time—before the courtroom dramas, the serial plastic surgeries, the nights spent in hyperbaric chambers and the play dates with Corey Feldman—Michael Jackson was just a run-of-the-mill 24-year-old musical genius, driving a burning Rolls-Royce with a melody stuck in his head.

It was the summer of 1982. Jackson was on Los Angeles's Ventura Freeway, commuting home after a day in the recording studio, where he and producer Quincy Jones were working on the follow-up to the singer's smash solo debut, *Off the Wall*. As Jackson recalled in his 1988 autobiography, he was "so absorbed by this tune floating around in my head" that he failed to notice the smoke billowing out from the undercarriage of his luxury sedan.

"We were getting off the freeway when a kid on a motorcycle pulls up to us and says, 'Your car's on fire.' Suddenly we noticed the smoke and pulled over and the whole bottom of the Rolls-Royce was on fire. That kid probably saved our lives." But not even that brush with death could shake Jackson's obsession with his work in progress. "Even while we were getting help and finding an alternate way to get where we were going, I was silently composing additional material."

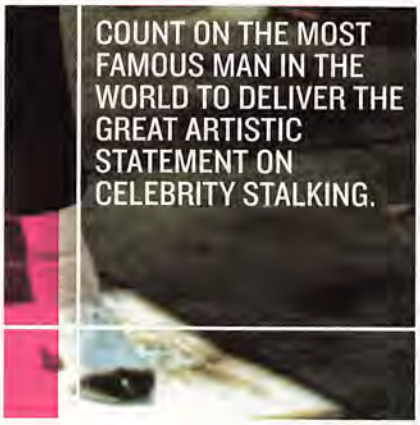
The song was perhaps the most personal Jackson had ever written, a guilt- and fear-streaked paternity drama inspired by the singer's run-ins with delusional female fans. Jackson had been working on it for months and was certain that he had something special on his hands.

"A musician knows hit material. Everything has to feel in place. It fulfills you and it makes you feel good," Jackson would recollect. "That's how I felt about 'Billie Jean.' I knew it was going to be big when I was writing it."

Jackson was right: "Billie Jean" was, to say the least, "hit material." Released in January 1983, the song topped the Billboard Hot 100 for seven weeks, held the No. 1 spot on the R&B chart for nine, sold more than a million singles and launched pop's biggest-ever commercial juggernaut, *Thriller*, which has sold upwards of 47 million copies worldwide, more than any album before or since.

But the song's place in history transcends mere numbers. "Billie Jean" shattered MTV's color line and went a long way toward destroying the racial apartheid that had prevailed on commercial radio for decades. Ushering in the modern music-video era, the single also pioneered a new kind of sleek, post-soul pop music whose echoes can be heard to this day. Above all, "Billie Jean" marked a coming of age, the moment when a former kiddie singing star blossomed into a new generation's equivalent of Elvis and the Beatles—the late 20th century's preeminent pop icon.

Not bad for a song that, to this day, remains one of the most sonically eccentric, psychologically fraught, downright bizarre things ever to land on Top 40 radio. Jackson's previous solo hits had been awash in the lush sounds of disco, but "Billie Jean" was almost frighteningly stark, with a pulsing, cat-on-the-prowl bass figure, whip-crack downbeat and eerie multi-tracked vocals ricocheting in the vast spaces between keyboards and strings. Over the years, listeners have grown used to Jackson's idiosyncratic vocal style—the falsetto whoops, "hee-hees," James-Brown-on-helium grunts and gonzo diction ("the chair is not my son"?)—but in 1982 no one had ever heard anything quite like it, which only heightened the song's unsettling effect, the sense that "Billie Jean" was a five-minute-long nervous breakdown, set to a beat.



This weirdness wasn't accidental. Bruce Swedien, Jones's longtime studio engineer, remembers: "When we recorded 'Billie Jean' ... Quincy told me, 'Okay, this piece of music has to have the most unique sonic personality of anything that we have ever recorded.' Jones had Jackson sing vocal overdubs through a six-foot-long cardboard tube, and brought in jazz saxophonist Tom Scott to play a rare instrument, the lyricon, a wind-controlled analog synthesizer whose sour, trumpet-like lines are subtly woven through the track. Bassist Louis Johnson ran through his part on every guitar he owned before Jackson settled on a Yamaha bass with an ideally thick and buzzing sound.

Swedien, meanwhile, turned his search for the perfect beat into an arts-and-crafts project, hiring carpenters to construct a special plywood drum platform, ordering a custom-made bass drum cover, using everything from cinder blocks to specially designed isolation flaps, all to capture just the right imaging on the snare and hi-hats. "See if you can think of any other piece of music where you can hear the first three drum beats and know what the song is," Swedien has said. "That's what I call sonic personality."

A major component of that personality almost didn't survive the final cut. "Billie Jean" opens with an unusually long bass-and-drums intro—Jackson doesn't begin singing until the 0:29 mark—that Jones wanted to trim but Jackson vehemently insisted be kept.

"I said, 'Michael we've got to cut that intro,'" Jones recalls. "He said, 'But that's the jelly!'"—Jackson's personal slang term for a funky beat is "smelly jelly"—"'That's what makes me want to dance.' And when Michael Jackson tells you, 'That's what makes me want to dance,' well, the rest of us just have to shut up."

It was Jackson's dancing, as much as his singing, that propelled the "Billie Jean" phenomenon. On May 16, 1983, more than 50 million viewers watched Jackson debut his famous moonwalk in a mesmerizing performance on the *Motown 25* television special. Then there was the "Billie Jean" video, in which Jackson slinks and whirls through a fantasy cityscape, with a sidewalk that lights up like a disco floor underfoot. MTV rarely aired videos by black performers, and when they refused to show "Billie Jean," CBS Records president Walter Yetnikoff went ballistic. "I said to MTV, 'I'm pulling everything we have off the air, all our product. I'm not going to give you any more videos. And I'm going to go public and fucking tell them about the fact you don't want to play music by a black guy.'" "Billie Jean" was promptly put in heavy rotation, and neither Jackson nor MTV ever looked back.

Those video images have lodged permanently in the cultural memory. But it's Jackson's songwriting that makes "Billie Jean" such a riveting psychological drama—the real thriller on his landmark album. Few songs have provided so much fodder for armchair Freudians: paranoia, sexual terror, temptation and shame mingle in lyrics that lurch from outright denials ("The kid is not my son") to seeming admissions of guilt ("This happened much too soon/She called me to her room"). Today, "Billie Jean" seems more than anything like a parable of the twisted relations between celebrities and their fans, a theme dramatized in the video, in which Jackson is pursued by a creepy gumshoe in a trench coat. Count on the most famous man in the world—a guy who has had audiences tearing at his clothes since he was 10 years old—to deliver the great artistic statement on celebrity stalking.

Whatever its larger autobiographical and historical significance, "Billie Jean" is first and foremost a dance track. Untold millions of radio and MTV plays have not reduced the power of a song that simply explodes out of the speakers.

"'Billie Jean' is hot on every level," says Greg Phillinganes, a legendary L.A. session musician who played keyboards on the song. "It's hot rhythmically. It's hot sonically, because the instrumentation is so minimal, you can really hear everything. It's hot melodically. It's hot lyrically. It's hot vocally. It affects you physically, emotionally, even spiritually." Twenty-three years on, Michael Jackson can rest assured: No one has made smellier jelly.

Available on: *Thriller* (Epic)

EUGENE ADEBARI/REX USA

Michael Jackson wonders why his right foot lacks floor-illuminating capabilities.

2

[2000]

B.O.B.

OUTKAST

THE PAST 25 YEARS OF MUSIC HISTORY, IN FIVE MINUTES AND FOUR SECONDS

BY JON CARAMANICA

AS ENGAGING AND inventive as Outkast's third album, *Aquemini*, was, there was something tranquil about it—a country affair, heavy with porch funk and instrumental breakdowns most jam bands would die for. Afterwards, Andre 3000—who always starts work on his next project before the previous one has even hit stores—decided it was time "to shake things up a little bit. I wanted a sonic slap."

And in 1999, on tour in London for *Aquemini*, Andre flipped to a news station and found his next single staring him in the face: "This news reporter, she said 'Something something and bombs over Baghdad.' It sounded good. I knew I could use it somewhere." Already working on a strange beat in the back of the tour bus—"I was thinking about UFOs"—and listening to music ranging from Sun Ra and Labelle to Rage Against the Machine and Squarepusher, he made sure "B.O.B.," better known as "Bombs Over Baghdad," the first thing he wrote for *Stankonia*, was going to be a typhoon of a track.

Though not about war at all—the song was often misread as a political rant— "B.O.B." was filled with conflict, as if several radio stations were simultaneously competing for your ear. "It was a beat and a lot of noise," remembers their A&R man Kawan Prather, "but they rode the beat so well that it didn't sound foreign or weird."

Well, maybe a little weird. With snatches of electro, rock, jungle, gospel and bass music, "B.O.B." was without question the most dense, chaotic, riotous song to hit hip-hop radio in years. "When I first heard the beat," remembers Outkast's Big Boi, "the room seemed to have this glow to it." It was a dare, a challenge no one else was up to answering. "Who want some?/Don't come unprepared," Dre rapped, the beat triggering his boastful side, which had long been dormant. Big Boi sucked his teeth, too: "Pullin' off the belt, 'cause a whipping's in order." After that, three minutes of DJ scratches, guitar peals, 808 eruptions and a gospel run to put Kirk Franklin to shame. Outkast associate Mr. DJ recalls: "Dre had these words written down—'power music electric revival'—and he said, 'let's give it to the choir.'" Uplifting pop is often simple, but "B.O.B." earned its jubilation.

All the audacity of the song was carried through to the million-dollar video, a traditional rap clip—cars, girls, the 'hood—gone psychedelic, thanks to a pastel explosion in post-production. "When I first went to meet Andre, he was hunched over a piano, thinking," says Dave Meyers, the video's director. "The first thing he said to me was, 'Hey, I really like fractals.' I ended up taking that and running with it." Pink, purple, green, blue, yellow—the video looked as if it had been colored by a Ritalin-addled 8-year-old. Outkast, though, stayed grounded throughout. "It was hot as hell that day, like 120 degrees," remembers Big Boi. "I was jumping on top of the bus. Dre was running through the projects with the kids chasing him like the Pied Piper."

"You could come off the *Aquemini* album, like, calmed down, or just turn it up to notch 20, so that's what we did," says Andre. Even so, the record label wanted to put out the sure hit, "Ms. Jackson," as the album's first single. But if "B.O.B." came second, Andre reasoned, "the urgency we were trying to display wouldn't have been the same." *Stankonia* came out on Halloween 2000, and soon thereafter came the "Ms. Jackson" juggernaut, which all but wiped "B.O.B." from the radar.

While "Ms. Jackson" became a No. 1 pop single, "B.O.B." barely dented the charts, peaking at No. 69 on *Billboard*'s R&B/Hip-Hop singles chart. Nevertheless, it's had an undeniably odd and potent afterlife. In the wake of the second Gulf War, it was banned temporarily by MTV Europe. Tennis player Jennifer Capriati requested it as her intro music at a match, incurring the scorn of the tennis world. And, most bizarrely, the instrumental was used as a music bed on CNN early on in the most recent incursions in the Middle East. "Don't pull the thang out, unless you plan to bang," indeed: a surreal soundtrack for the meeting of reality and art.

Available on: *Stankonia* (LaFace/Arista)

DANNY CLINCH/CORBIS OUTLINE

#953

NOTICE OF RESIGNATION

#432
No.10324454 For Office Use Only

PERSONAL DATA

1. _____ Recipient's Name
2. _____ Company Name
3. _____ Address

Dear _____:
Recipient's Name

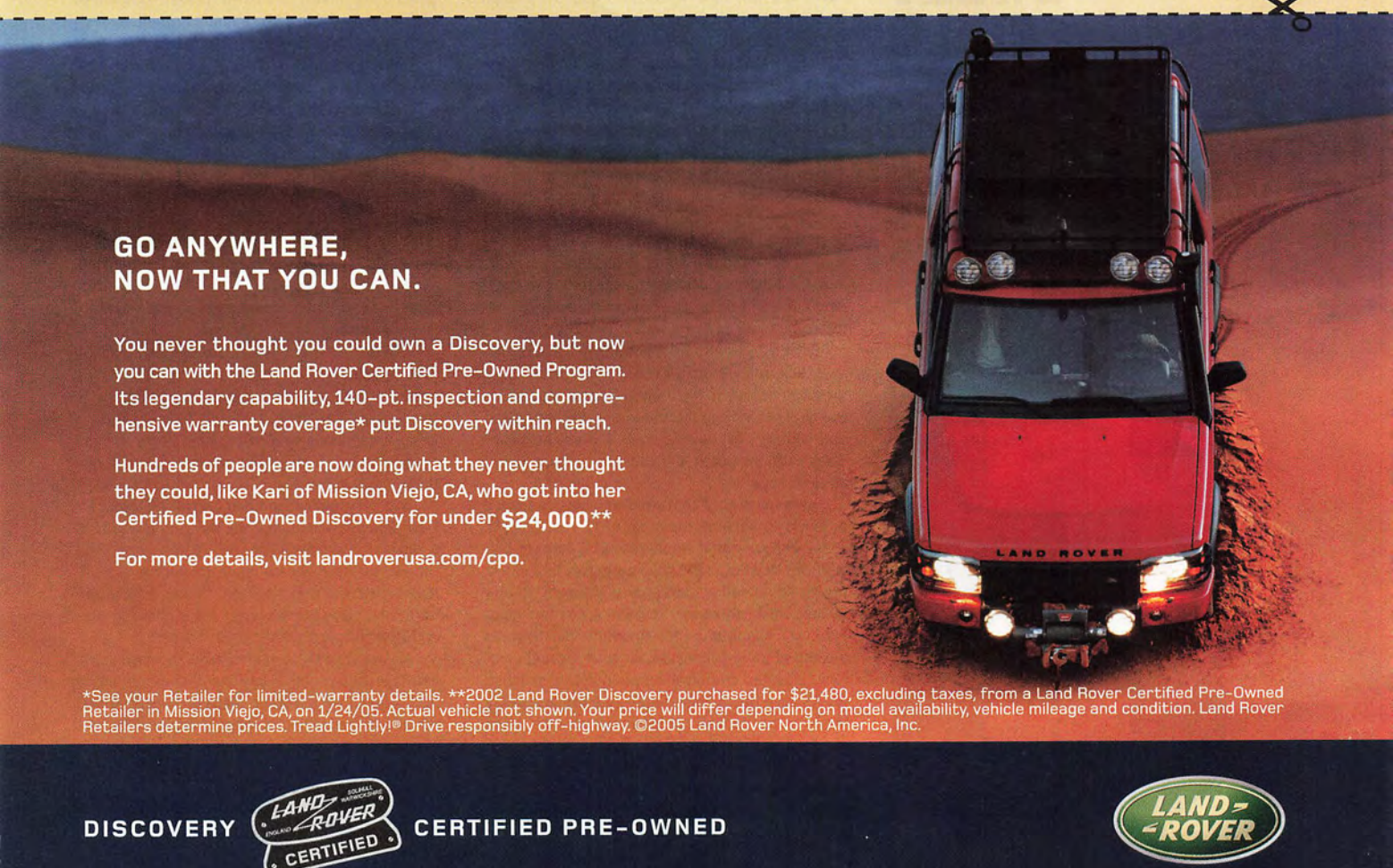
Please accept this letter as my formal notice of resignation effective immediately.

I will be relocating to _____ and can no longer offer my services.
Anywhere

Sincerely,

X _____ _____
Sign Here Date

_____ _____
Print Name Title



GN'R: "Is this really the biggest couch you have?"

[1987]

3

SWEET CHILD O' MINE

GUNS N' ROSES

BEFORE THE HAIR PLUGS, BEFORE THE FULL-BLOWN INSANITY, L.A.'S GREATEST BAND RELEASED THE MOTHER OF ALL POWER BALLADS

BY JON CARAMANICA

IT BEGAN AS A JOKE. In the summer of 1986, Guns N' Roses was just a few steps from smacked-out degeneracy. The group were all but squatting in a house in Laughlin Park, north of downtown L.A.: no real furniture, no TV, just a few lamps that sometimes worked and a few beds that did so more often.

The band—W. Axl Rose, guitarists Slash and Izzy Stradlin, bassist Duff McKagan and drummer Steven Adler—were lolling around one afternoon when Slash got to noodling on his guitar.

"This lick I made up," he remembers, "was kind of a joke. Everyone was high." Just a few cleanly spaced up-and-down notes, it was direct, melodic and, for a player much more accustomed to lightning-quick shredding with heavy doses of snarl, far too corny to do anything with.

But Rose, suddenly inspired by Slash's throwaway lick, rushed upstairs and finished writing a message of love to his then-girlfriend, model Erin Everly: "I had written this poem and reached a dead end with it," Axl said later. But when he heard Slash's riff, the poem "popped into my head. It just all came together."

Axl's mash note combined with Slash's chance outburst to become the meat of "Sweet Child O' Mine," the song that would rescue the power ballad from its stint in lite-rock purgatory and invest it with some serious swagger and brawn. Before "Sweet Child," there was something comical about hard-rock bands who tried to emote. But this was a blend of dude-friendly guitar wizardry and carefully calibrated emotional outpouring that satisfied GN'R's core headbanging audience while showing them to be capable of cleaning up nice when romance was in the air.

"Sweet Child" was indelible and epic. Even if their personal lives were in a shambles, everyone in the band was meticulous when it came to songwriting. Slash's intro sounded like a reveille, and when Axl launched into the opening couplet—"She's got a smile that it seems to me/Reminds me of childhood memories"—he sounded simultaneously brimming with elation and full of tears.

But "Sweet Child O' Mine" would never have been half the success it became without the heavy MTV rotation of the video that came with it, shot in January 1988 in an abandoned ballroom in South Central L.A. The original idea was simply to capture the band hanging out and performing casually, with Erin Everly and the rest of the band's girlfriends all on set.

It was a long, tedious shoot that at first seemed hopeless: "The first couple of takes, I'm thinking, 'This looks like crap. There's no vibe,'" says director Nigel Dick. "But over my shoulder, all the girls are giggling, wetting themselves."

Axl, it turned out, was a sex symbol, and the 'Sweet Child' video minted his signature look. The teased hair he had when they filmed "Welcome to the Jungle" was gone, replaced by long, flowing locks, a bandanna wrapped around his head—and the side-to-side swaying that would become his distinctive anti-dance.

The only ballad on their debut *Appetite for Destruction*, "Sweet Child" was officially released as a single in late June 1988; two months later it hit the top of the *Billboard* chart, becoming Guns N' Roses' first and only No. 1 hit. "It was a signature lick," says *Appetite* producer Mike Clink. "It was unmistakable, and unmistakably theirs."

Axl would go on to marry Everly, and though the marriage lasted only a few months and ended in accusations of domestic abuse, "Sweet Child" remains a keepsake of a more optimistic time—for Axl, and for the band as a whole. "Axl sang beautifully on the song," says Duff. "The whole thing was a beautiful mistake."

Available on: *Appetite for Destruction* (Geffen)

JODI SUMMERS/RETNA LTD.

"Ladies and gentlemen … 'N Sy … whoa. U2!"

ONE

U2

THE MISUNDERSTOOD BREAKUP SONG THAT KEPT THE BAND TOGETHER

BY LAURA SINAGRA

[1991]

4

IN THE SUMMER of 2005, no one was surprised to see Bono speaking out on world poverty from the stage at Live 8 one week, then giving a shout-out to Johnny Drama on HBO's *Entourage* the next. But it wasn't always that way. The U2 we now know—as anchored in the swirl of pop culture as in world politics—only emerged with 1991's *Achtung Baby* album. And *Achtung Baby* would never have happened without "One." In fact, U2 might not still be around today had they not stumbled upon this universally loved—though often misunderstood—ballad of struggle and fellowship.

"It amazes me," Bono has said, "when people tell me they played it at their wedding or for comfort at a funeral. I go to myself, 'Are you crazy? It's about breaking up!'" Indeed, when the song was written, it seemed like the end of the line for the band itself. The four members were at a creative impasse after 1988's bloated *Rattle and Hum* had left them pegged as tedious and pretentious. Pushing to change the band's formula, a burned-out Bono and guitarist Edge were gravitating toward an interest in electronics; the rhythm section, consisting of Adam Clayton and Larry Mullen Jr., wanted to continue in the same anthemic direction that had made them platinum stars.

In late 1990 they had begun recording at Hansa studios in Berlin, where David Bowie and Iggy Pop worked up some of the '70s' best rock experiments. But after a few weeks, the location was starting to seem ill-chosen. Just yards from the recently toppled Berlin Wall, the band watched a city realize that unification alone wasn't going to solve all its problems. Recalled engineer Flood: "There seemed to be this dark cloud hanging over the whole session."

Then producer Daniel Lanois heard Bono working on some middle-eight fragments and, elsewhere, the Edge toying with a guitar line that sounded promising. He got the band together, and they reluctantly began to play what would become the basic structure of "One." Immediately, the Edge said, "Everyone recognized it was a special piece. It was like we'd caught a glimpse of what the song could be."

The finished product retains that initial hypnotic feeling. The opening, echoing guitar sounds more like a sad fade-out coda than a beginning—tenuous, even defeated. And when Bono's voice enters, it's with an exhausted question routinely asked by doctors, mothers and, most important, lovers who want permission to leave without being the bad guy: "Is it getting better, or do you feel the same?" Then, as he muddles through that achingly familiar script, something changes. Lines that could be pulled from any doomed couple's final argument are capped by a larger idea when Bono sings the words "One love," a little ambivalently. Of course, any devout Rastafarian or dorm-room pothead will recognize "One love" as Bob Marley's call for solidarity among the poor—it's as if Bono, while he ponders his failure to rescue a troubled partner, starts to consider his failure to save the world. The Edge's guitar punctuates his every statement with a tight little riptide swirl, the sound of weariness in the face of a challenge to "do what ya should." Amid these doubts, the drums and bass continue to urge Bono on to a nobler goal.

The complexity of "One" led to the band's filming three different videos for it. One featured Bono alone in a bar, ruminating over a cigarette. Another gestured toward the AIDS crisis, with the band in drag and shots of Bono's aging father, leading to speculation that the lyrics concerned the difficulty of communicating across generation gaps. A third took up the band's beloved American themes again, showing a buffalo running in a field. Indeed, the song got the Americana stamp of approval when it was eventually covered by Johnny Cash, who stripped the song to its raw core.

"One," which never actually made it to No. 1, charting only at No. 10, is certainly a breakup song. But it's also very much about the duty to stay together, about finding some kind of connection in times of war, fragmentation, plague, poverty and cultural difference. About being too cynical to believe in the hippie version of global oneness, but too much of a believer to reject it.

"There's the idea that 'we get to carry each other,'" said the Edge of his favorite lyric. "'Get to' is the key. The original lyric was 'We have to carry each other,' and it was never quite right—it was too fuckin' obvious and platitudinous. But 'get to' … it's like our privilege to carry one another."

Available on: *Achtung Baby* (Island)

ANTON CORBIJN, COURTESY U2 LTD.

Nirvana: Sticklers for pH levels.

[1991]

5

SMELLS LIKE TEEN SPIRIT

NIRVANA

REVOLUTION, INSPIRED BY A WOMAN'S PERSONAL HYGIENE PRODUCT

THE FOOTAGE FROM an early 1991 Seattle show on Nirvana's *With the Lights Out* DVD illustrates it beautifully: Playing in front of an audience that's never heard "Smells Like Teen Spirit" before—because it's never been played in public before—the band cannonballs into that mighty four-chord riff, and within moments everybody gets it. There are thousands of stories about how people's ideas of pop music changed in the fall of 1991 that include the phrase "and then I heard 'Smells Like Teen Spirit.'" The reaction is usually something like Tori Amos's: "It was like my blood just stood up and saluted."

The title was coined by Kathleen Hanna (now Le Tigre's singer), who had scrawled KURT SMELLS LIKE TEEN SPIRIT on Kurt Cobain's bedroom wall. "Earlier on," he explained, "we were kinda having this discussion on … teen revolution and stuff like that, and I took that as a compliment, I thought that she was saying that I was a person who could inspire … And it turns out she just meant that I smelt like the deodorant. I didn't even know that deodorant existed until after the song was written."

Cobain pulled together the famously cryptic words from his notebook—they appear to be about the demands of a mass-culture audience, aside from that whole mulatto/albino/mosquito bit—and strapped them to a loud-quiet-loud one-riff technique he'd picked up from his beloved Pixies. Nirvana recorded "Teen Spirit" for their second album, *Nevermind*, with producer Butch Vig and mix-polisher Andy Wallace. (Cobain later dismissed its production as "closer to Mötley Crüe than a punk-rock record.") The music industry was ready for Nirvana to do well—they'd been the subject of a huge major-label bidding war, and the week *Nevermind* was released, the college-radio magazine CMJ wrote, "if there's a band that will single-handedly destroy the barriers between metal, alternative and commercial radio, Aberdeen, Washington's Nirvana is it." But nobody expected that "Teen Spirit" would conquer the world.

The rest of the story tells itself, a downward spiral of sadness: the cash-ins; the bandwagon-jumpers; the used flannel clothing that Nirvana bought because they were cold and broke becoming high-fashion accessories; the radio-friendly unit shifters; the alternative-rock gold-rush and bust and backlash; the fame- and drug-fueled freakouts; the 27-year-old junkie-father-figurehead's blatantly telegraphed suicide; the posthumous beatification of a punk-rock guy who made something more powerful than he could handle; the endless longing for the next "Teen Spirit," even though "Teen Spirit" wasn't intended to be the next anything.

What an incredible song, though.

Available on: *Nevermind* (DGC)

DOUGLAS WOLK

[1989]

6

LIKE A PRAYER

MADONNA

THE FORMER MRS. PENN OUTRAGED THE CHURCH, ALIENATED PEPSI—AND RELAUNCHED HER CAREER

Madonna in her Sunday best.

BY THE SPRING of 1989, Madonna's meteoric pop career had suffered some mild setbacks: Though her most recent album, 1986's *True Blue*, had been a success, it didn't have a hit as wildly sexy as '84's "Like a Virgin"; her latest movie, *Who's That Girl*, had flopped; and her paparazzi-plagued marriage to Sean Penn had just ended in a paparazzi-plagued divorce. On the eve of the release of the *Like a Prayer* CD and a world tour, the one thing she didn't need was a pullout by a major sponsor. Or maybe she did.

The Material Girl had signed on as a spokeswoman for Pepsi that year, and the first commercial, timed to hype her new album, was adorable: A little girl playing young Madonna Louise Ciccone gets a glimpse of future fame while the 30-year-old Madonna magically visits her own humble childhood home; both drink the soda. That ad ran only once, during *The Cosby Show*, and was pulled the following day—the day the video for the album's first single, "Like a Prayer," debuted on MTV.

When Kabbalah-practicing Madge performed the song in all-over white at Live 8, it seemed as wholesome as "We Are the World." But back in '89, "Like a Prayer"—and its famously provocative video—scandalized Middle America as nothing had since Elvis's hips. The song's gospel-inflected melodies, haunting aria verses and exuberant chorus combined evangelical zeal and orgasmic promise, as Madonna, whose mother used to kneel on uncooked rice to pray, turned the act of genuflection into an elaborate sexual tease: "I'm down on my knees/I wanna take you there."

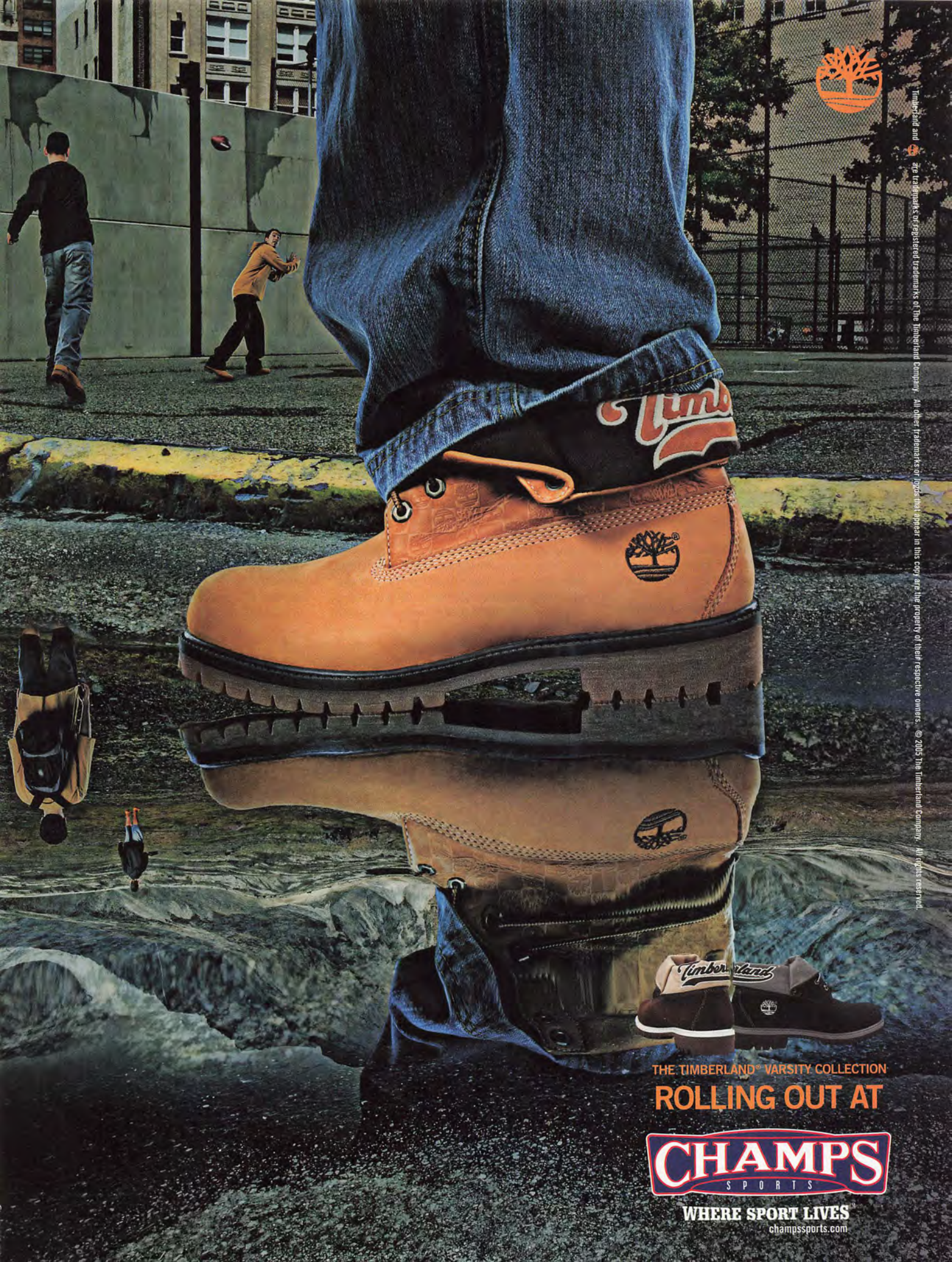
"Crucifixes are sexy because there's a naked man on them," said Madonna in 1985. Playing with that idea, she and "Like a Virgin" video director Mary Lambert concocted a pulpy scenario involving Madonna witnessing a murder, running through a church in a sexy slip, making out with a statue of a black saint that comes to life at her pleasure, freeing a black man from jail, then rejoicing with a gospel choir while exposing stigmata and dancing in front of burning crosses. Once they heard about the concept, the Andrae Crouch gospel choir, who sang on the record, refused to be filmed for the video.

When religious groups threatened to boycott Pepsi (and KFC too!), the company dropped its heretical spokeswoman. Naturally, Madonna's album sales skyrocketed. Taboo stokes desire, as she always pointed out, crediting that realization to her Catholic upbringing. "That's the surest way to interest a child," said Madonna, "If you say to them, 'You can't go into that room,' they're going to go into that room. That's what Catholicism does."

Available on: *Like a Prayer* (Sire)

LAURA SINAGRA

NIRVANA: WEDDLE/SIPA PRESS; MADONNA: LIME FOTO



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Joy Division: Nice weather makes them even *sadder.*

7 LOVE WILL TEAR US APART

[1980]

JOY DIVISION

THE HEARTBROKEN ORIGIN OF NEW WAVE

BATTERED BY EPILEPSY, his marriage in bad shape—partly because of his ongoing dalliance with a Belgian journalist—Joy Division's 23-year-old Ian Curtis wrote a bleak three-verse lyric, staring with cold eyes into the numbing emotions and sexual alienation of a crumbling relationship. Thanks to their BBC radio performance in November 1979, the Manchester postpunk band's agonized "Love Will Tear Us Apart" was the "best-known unrecorded song in Britain" for a few months; a reviewer at a February 1980 live show called it "one hell of a classic ... staggeringly melodic and momentous." The single finally came out in June 1980, but Curtis didn't get to hear what became of it: On May 18, two days before Joy Division's first American tour was due to start, he hanged himself at home in Macclesfield. "Love will tear us apart" was inscribed on his tombstone.

That's the romantic fable, but it's not the whole story. Curtis was a troubled artist, not an unstoppable doom machine—"Ian was primarily a fun guy, a good laugh," guitarist Bernard Sumner has said—and "Love Will Tear Us Apart" isn't just an epitaph, it's a dance song. Joy Division had started out as punk rockers, but they loved disco: Drummer Stephen Morris was nicknamed "the human drum machine"; at the March 1980 session where producer Martin Hannett recorded "Love ..." the band also cut a dancier version of their song "She's Lost Control." After Curtis's death, the remaining members of Joy Division added keyboardist Gillian Gilbert, regrouped as New Order and built a reputation for club music.

"Love Will Tear Us Apart" cracked the British Top 20 twice, in 1980 and 1995, but never even charted in the U.S. Time has been kind to it, though—the song has become an alt-rock standard, covered by dozens of bands from the Cure and Squarepusher to Nouvelle Vague, and not just because of its unshakeable lyrics.

In the icy, mechanical pep of its groove, Curtis's mannered croon (inspired here by Frank Sinatra, according to his widow, Deborah), the airy synthesizer hook that sugars up the despondent chorus and the guitar parts that rush and tumble where they might have roared a few years earlier, you can hear Joy Division defining the style and sound of new wave for the next half-decade. "Love" was Curtis's cry of despair; but what makes it bearable—what makes it great—is that it offers the body the release it denies the mind.

Available on: *Substance* (Qwest/Warner Bros.)
DOUGLAS WOLK

8 SUCKER MCs

[1983]

RUN-D.M.C.

TEEN SPIRIT, B-BOY STYLE

Run-D.M.C.: "We thought iPods would be smaller."

YOU KNOW THE type. They come from the wackest part of town, try to rap but can't get down, don't even know their English, their verb or noun. Such were the perpetrators dispatched with historic style by 18-year-old Joseph "Run" Simmons on this song from 1983, The Year Hip-Hop Broke.

Previously, the only versions of hip-hop to make it out of New York were either by the rhyme-cribbing club doormen who formed the Sugar Hill Gang or Grandmaster Flash's red-leathered glam troupe the Furious Five. "Sucker MCs," released as a B-side to the single "It's Like That," changed everything: the sound, style, attitude and dogma of hip-hop, drafting the blueprint before Jay-Z even dropped out of high school.

Rather than lush disco or studio-band funk, "Sucker MCs" came at you like a piece of field artillery. *BOOM—ka-ka-ka-ka-ka*—that famed opening salvo started as a beat by Kurtis Blow's backing band Orange Krush, who performed on the song "Action" with singer Alyson Williams. "Everyone was rapping on R&B beats played by DJs," recalls Darryl "D.M.C." McDaniels. "But we were like, 'Yo, we just need a beat.' So Larry [Smith, producer and Krush bassist], he was like, 'I'll just take all the music off 'Action.'" Thus was proved the basic hip-hop theory: "Action" - "Music" = MC [squared].

Mixed with syncopated electro-handclaps from an Oberheim DMX, the resulting "krush groove" became a giant geological formation over which strode sudden rock gods Run and his high-school buddy D.M.C. Borrowing a rhyme he'd heard D.M.C. say in ninth grade, Run began by rapping "Two years ago, a friend of mine/Asked me to say some MC rhymes"—a striking framing device in which he wrote the group's (and hip-hop's) history on their first record. When it was his turn, D.M.C. realized that his partner had already taken his favorite opener. "So I was like, 'Um ... I'm D.M.C.? In the place to be? I go to St. John's University?' 'Cause that's where I was going to high school. I just said what I was doing."

The keep-it-real ethos was established, the declaration of independence signed, and the spare, turntable-mixer-MC format set in stone. Recognizing the elemental force of the package—two raw, round-the-way guys rapping on rock-hard beats—Russell Simmons christened the group Run-D.M.C. and released the single. "The whole summer it was everywhere," says McDaniels. "Every boombox, every radio, every house, bedroom, every alleyway. By July 4, I was tired of that record!"

Available on: *Run-D.M.C.* (Profile)
CHRIS NORRIS

JOY DIVISION: KEVIN CUMMINS/IDOLS; RUN-D.M.C.: GENE BAGNATO/RETNA LTD.

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[1998]

9 ... BABY ONE MORE TIME

BRITNEY SPEARS

HER FIRST AND GREATEST SINGLE CAN STILL MAKE A GROWN MAN BLUSH

Britney Spears before ... well, *everything.*

JUST LIKE "WE Will Rock You," "Start Me Up" and the theme from *Jaws*, Spears's career-baptizing "... Baby One More Time" makes its presence known in exactly one second, opening with an unmistakable three-note door-knock of a piano line. From there, it's one big whirlpool of wah-wah guitar lines and EKG-machine bass-slaps—a perfectly fine, slickly conceived pop tune.

Then Britney opens her mouth, and all hell breaks loose: "Oh baby, baby ..." Half-cooing, half-begging, she stuffs the song with so much sexual force, even a seemingly innocuous line like "The reason I breathe is you" becomes a plea.

And she was just 16, a fact not lost upon the outraged moms (and slightly embarrassed dads) whose ears reddened when they heard the song's suggestive chorus (nor was it lost upon her video director Nigel Dick, who shot her sashaying down high school halls). At the time, teen-pop was still a boys' club, but while the guys were crooning about crushes, Spears was already planning the sleep-over party. Perhaps not surprisingly, even Spears herself had problems dealing with track's intensity.

"I didn't do well at all the first day in the studio," she says of her 1998 recording sessions with Swedish producer Max Martin. "I was just too nervous. So I went out that night and had some fun. The next day I was completely relaxed and nailed it. You gotta be relaxed singing '... Baby One More Time.'"

A healthy attitude to keep in mind, seeing how she'd have to sing it a lot throughout the fall of 1998, when Spears went on a nationwide mall tour to help the tune gather steam; by the time *Baby* the album was released, Spears was already a star on MTV, and *TRL* was playing her navel-wagging, schoolgirl-skirted clip non-stop.

But for all of Spears's scorching innuendo, a song as dramatic and dynamic as "Baby" could have been a hit no matter who sang it—and in fact, it's been covered by power-poppers Fountains of Wayne and Scottish mope-rockers Travis, both of whom played up the tune's underlying desperation. "We did it for a laugh the first time," Travis's Fran Healy has said. "And as we played it, the irony slipped from my smile. It's a very well-crafted song. It [has] that magic thing."

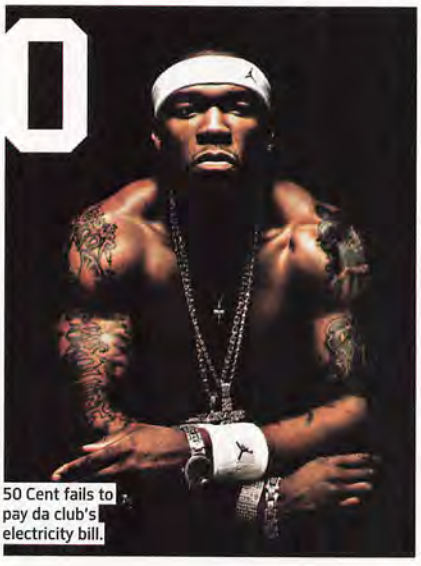
Available on: *... Baby One More Time* (Jive)
BRIAN RAFTERY

[2003]

10 IN DA CLUB

50 CENT

HOW A BULLET-RIDDLED QUEENS MC WROTE THE PERFECT SONG FOR NIGHTCLUB BRAWLS AND SWEET SIXTEENS



50 Cent fails to pay da club's electricity bill.

BEFORE HE EVEN released an album, Curtis Jackson had pissed off half the MCs in America. With his beef-courting, hype-building 1999 single, "How to Rob," the former Queens, New York, crack salesman simultaneously established his bottomless thug cred, proved his sense of humor and won the attention of the rap world by threatening to mug DMX, Missy Elliott, Jay-Z and a flock of others. It was 50's willingness to make enemies that made him both appealing and unwelcome at Columbia Records, which signed him on the strength of the battle-ready stance that led to "How to Rob"—and then dropped him when he was shot a chart-topping nine times. "The rep was both a great thing and a deterrent," says Paul Rosenberg, manager to Eminem, who signed 50 to Shady Records after he'd become a mixtape circuit demigod.

50's aura of danger became an almost audible part of his first song aimed directly at the mainstream, "In da Club." Over a tense, crime-soundtrack intro, 50 chanted syncopated "Go"s around the downbeats, giving the slowed-down party-call "Go shorty" an unsettling cadence. His bullet-wounded cheek lent the rapper a battle-hardened slur as he mentioned alcohol, drug use and emotionless sex in the opening chorus, establishing what became the *ne plus ultra* of the thug/club-track genre. "It's a party record, but it's a gangsta party record," explains Rosenberg. "It's got a hardcore vibe, no round edges." For his subject, 50 imagined "the sort of ethereal club that everybody raps about," says Rosenberg. Only with knives.

The lyrics and beat came together early. Dr. Dre roughed out a hypnotic track with stark keyboard jabs and a bassline by studio musician Mike Elizondo. 50 dropped his lyrics, and Dre mixed in his magic with spare, judicious doses: brighter stabs in the chorus, the tense guitar strum that enters midway through—"those little things here and there really brought it to life," Rosenberg recalls. Smuggling state-of-the-art violence and sexism into a bouncy *TRL*-rocking package, the song became a No. 1 pop hit and helped sell 812,000 albums in four days, surpassing every other debut since SoundScan started keeping track in 1991. It was the theme song for a super-hardcore MC, or a universal soldier (the video referenced the Van Damme vehicle of the same name, when gym-buff 50 enters the top of frame upside down).

This is doubtless the meaning Oprah had in mind when she chose the song for her birthday special, although it's unlikely that every bar-mitzvah and sweet-sixteen baller still pumping the hit is into getting rubbed. Even the song's author recalls a more innocent joy with "In da Club," sharing his somewhat paradoxical reaction to its success. "I was so excited," he said in 2003, "I would just be at home listening to my record by myself."

Available on: *Get Rich or Die Tryin'* (Shady/Aftermath/Interscope)
CHRIS NORRIS

SPEARS: MARC BAPTISTE/CORBIS OUTLINE; 50 CENT: SACHA WALDMAN/IDOLS

I don't mean "bitches" in a disrespectful way...

THE BOONDOCKS

OCTOBER 2ND @ 11PM

[adult swim]

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Eminem, in a rare moment of biting his tongue.

11
MY NAME IS
EMINEM
[1999]

Crazy-ass cracka politely introduces himself

→ Nothing could have prepared Hip-Hop Nation for the arrival of a bottle-blond white boy from a Detroit trailer park, with Jay-Z-caliber rhymes and a sensibility equal parts Bart Simpson, Johnny Rotten and Ted Bundy. Eminem's 1999 debut single, delivered in a nasal bark over Dr. Dre's cheery cartoon-funk beat, was a tour de force introduction to the World According to Shady, a mixture of uproarious pop-culture parody, class resentment and dark Oedipal drama. In a brisk four-and-half-minutes, he confesses to his own suicide, contemplates patricide, berates his Mom, tears Pamela Anderson's breasts off, drops acid and announces his credo: "God sent me to piss the world off." For years white MCs had been walking punch lines, but with "My Name Is," Em established definitively that it's about skills, not skin tone.

Available on: *The Slim Shady LP* (Interscope)

12
THE MESSAGE
GRANDMASTER FLASH & THE FURIOUS FIVE
[1982]

Old-school heroes survey the mean streets

→ Rap was widely dismissed as a fleeting party-music craze—all yes-yes-y'all's and up-jumped-the-boogies—until Grandmaster Flash came along and gave it a social conscience. "The Message" was a panorama of Reagan-era urban blight, homelessness, drug addiction and crime, stitched together by the most celebrated refrain in hip-hop history: "It's like a jungle sometimes, it makes me wonder/How I keep from going under." The lyrics were groundbreaking, but so was Flash's music, a chimerical funk-dub-electro groove that keeps evolving over seven-plus minutes. It's a taste of what rap would become: a medium for street poetry and sonic experimentation, the preeminent popular art form of the late 20th century. A fad? Not quite.

Available on: *The Message* (Sugar Hill)

MY TOP FIVE

CHRIS MARTIN
COLDPLAY
[b. 3/2/77]

TAKE ON ME
A-HA

BITTERSWEET SYMPHONY
THE VERVE

REBELLION (LIES)
THE ARCADE FIRE

NOTHING LASTS FOREVER
ECHO & THE BUNNYMEN

99 PROBLEMS
JAY-Z

13
FIGHT FOR YOUR RIGHT
BEASTIE BOYS
[1986]

Snotty New York MCs tap keg, vanquish Dee Snider

→ Two decades later, it's still unclear: Was "Fight for Your Right" a dumb frathouse anthem or a note-perfect send-up? Probably a bit of both—either way, the huge 1986 hit by three snotty white MCs and their longhair producer Rick Rubin is a glorious racket. Rapping in an eardrum-shredding screech atop the crudest power chords this side of Twisted Sister, the Beasties rail against mom (for confiscating their porn), dad (for swiping their cigarettes) and the teacher (for treating them like "jerks"). Eventually the group would refine their genre-bending aesthetic and become leading postmodern pop tastemakers. But "Fight" is still their landmark song, capturing the moment when suburban metalheads discovered hip-hop, and a reminder of the heady days when the Beasties cavorted onstage beside giant inflatable penises.

Available on: *Licensed to Ill* (Def Jam)

14
YOU SHOOK ME ALL NIGHT LONG
AC/DC
[1980]

Aussie Lords of the Riff dance on Bon Scott's grave

→ The death of a lead singer would do in most bands, but when AC/DC frontman Bon Scott fatally choked on his own vomit in February 1980, the group quickly hired a replacement (ace caterwauler Brian Johnson) and were back in the studio within weeks. That summer they released *Back in Black*, highlighted by this pummeling, fiendishly catchy, unrepentantly dimwitted celebration of hot sex and strained double-entendres. As Angus and Malcolm Young's power chords crash and crunch around him, Johnson shrieks a string of silly metaphors ("Working double time/On the seduction line") and brags about blowjobs ("Made a meal out of me, and come back for more"). A quarter-century later, the song remains the last word in metal-boogie, guaranteed to turn headbangers into dancing fools and vice versa.

Available on: *Back in Black* (Epic)

15
HEY YA
OUTKAST
[2003]

Unavoidable ... and we're still not sick of it

→ Even Prince at his most experimental never conceived a genre-mash as nutty as Andre 3000's electro/folk-rock/funk/power pop/hip-hop/neo-soul/kitchen sink rave-up. The sound is remarkable: Raucous acoustic guitar strumming collides with blipping synths, while Andre veers from tuneless shouts to gospel-style testifying. But beneath the sonic dazzle—and the leering come-ons to Beyoncé and Lucy Liu—lurks great confessional songwriting about love, sex, heartbreak and the impossibility of monogamy. (When Andre sings, "Thank God for Mom and Dad/For sticking two together/'Cause we don't know how," the pain is palpable.) All this, plus the twenty-first century's first great catchphrase: "Shake it like a Polaroid picture."

Available on: *Speakerboxxx/The Love Below* (LaFace/Arista)

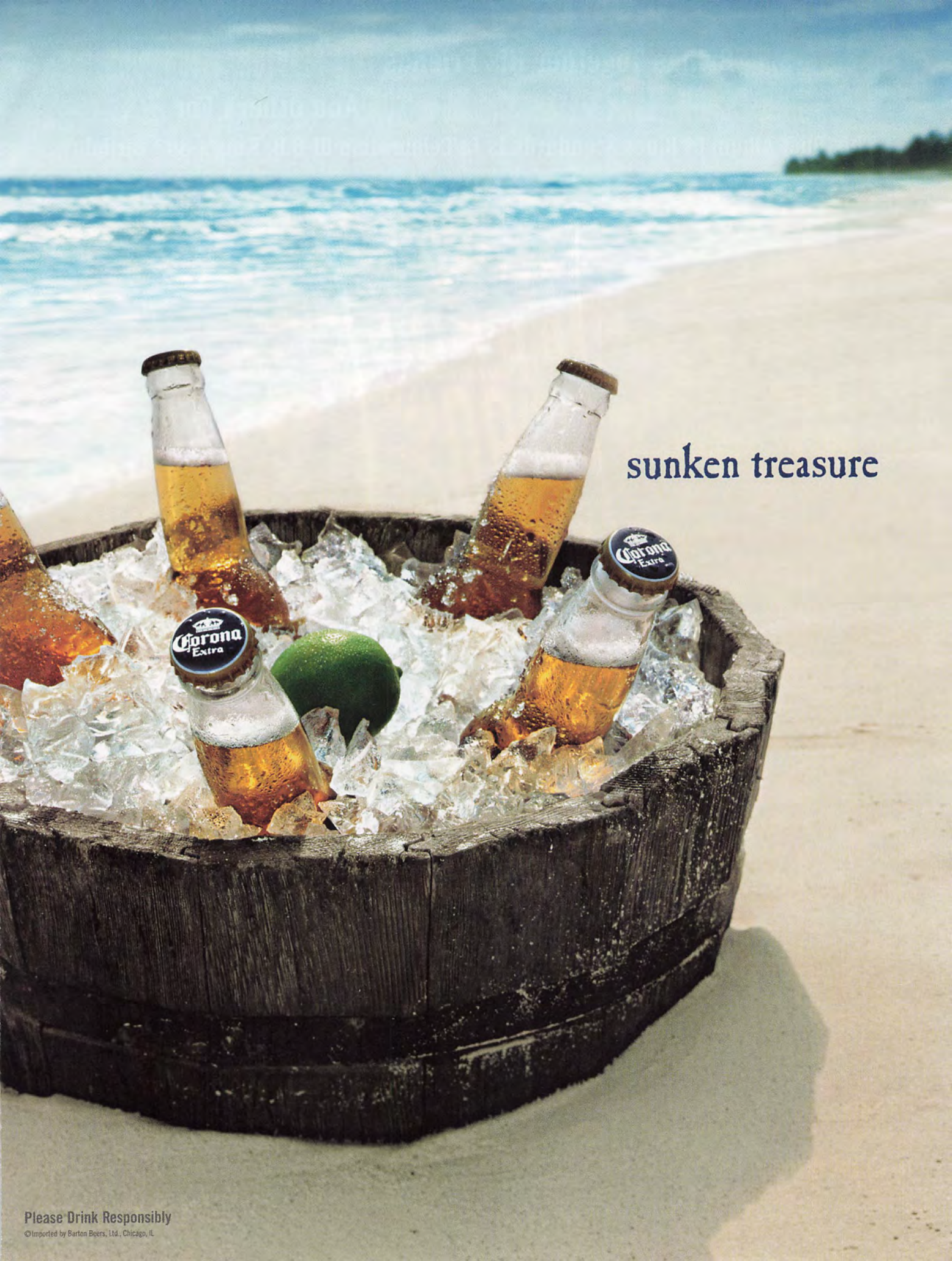
16
I WANT IT THAT WAY
BACKSTREET BOYS
[1999]

No, not *that* way, you perv ...

→ The secret force behind the American teen pop explosion of the late '90s wasn't American, wasn't a teen and never once turned up on *TRL* in a bellyshirt. He was Max Martin, the Swedish songwriter-producer responsible for monster hits by Britney and 'N Sync, and (with fellow Swede Andreas Carlsson) for this transcendently catchy Backstreet Boys ballad. A triumph of classic craftsmanship and pure teenybopper cheese, "I Want It That Way" has a swooping, Beatles-worthy chorus and tremulous loverboy harmonies that induced a worldwide postpubescent orgasm in the summer of 1999, when the song topped the charts in 15 countries. The key, though, is Martin's mischievous lyric, with a title phrase so ambiguous that it can mean just about anything, depending on where you sit and how dirty your mind is.

Available on: *Millennium* (Jive)

EMINEM: JACK CHUCK/CORBIS OUTLINE; MARTIN: CHRIS UNCLE; FILMMAGIC.COM



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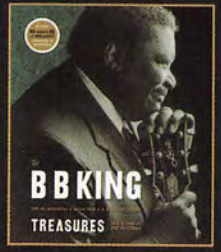
Need Your Love So Bad – with SHERYL CROW ◆ Hummingbird – with JOHN MAYER ◆
Early In The Morning – with VAN MORRISON ◆
Never Make Your Move Too Soon – with ROGER DALTREY ◆
Funny How Time Slips Away – with BOBBY BLAND ◆
AND MORE!



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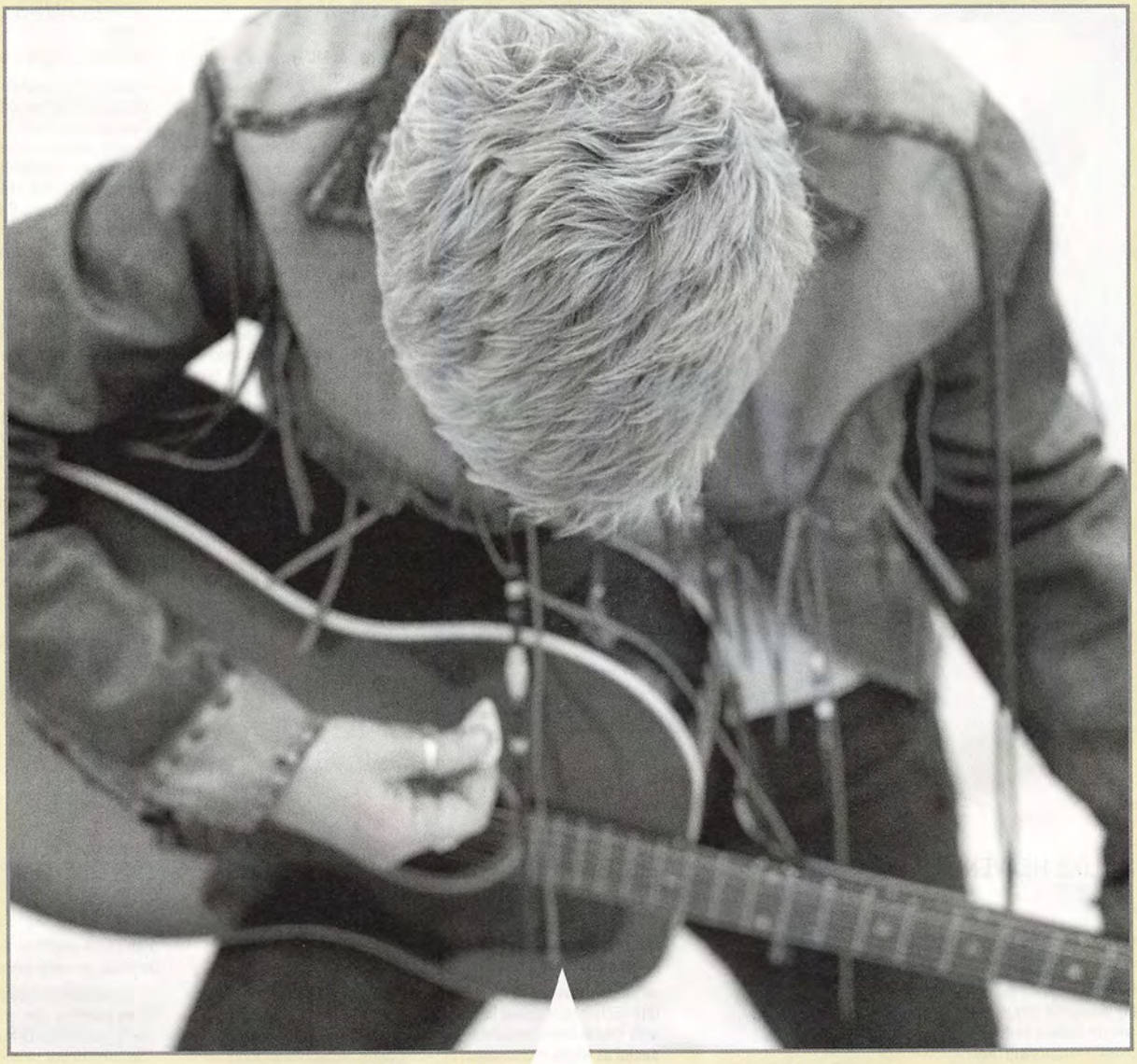

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That's "*Miss* Ross's Nipple" to you.

17
SUPER FREAK
RICK JAMES
[1981]

That's not MC Hammer's song. It's Rick James's. Bitch.

→ Rick James was the poor man's Prince: a debauched funk auteur with dodgy fashion sense, his own lingerie-clad girl group (the Mary Jane Girls) and a genius for future-shock synthesizer grooves. This electro-funk masterpiece was first conceived while watching bad dancers flail across the floor at his concerts, but by the time it reached the pop and R&B charts in the fall of 1981, it had become an ode to a sexpot groupie. By today's standards, the freak in question is ... well ... not that freaky. ("The kind of girl you read about in *New Wave* magazine"?) But James's Vincent Price–channeling lead vocal performance is a hoot, and not even MC Hammer's "U Can't Touch This" could kill the joy of the song's signature synth-and-bass riff.

Available on: *Street Songs* (Motown)

18
I'M COMING OUT
DIANA ROSS
[1980]

Miss Ross sings for the boys

→ Gay pride crashed the *Billboard* Top Five with Diana Ross's joyous 1980 hit about kicking down the closet door. Written and produced by Nile Rodgers and Bernard Edwards of disco godheads Chic, "I'm Coming Out" carries a straightforward message of pride and defiance—"I want the world to know/I've got to let it show"—over a tight, sleek arrangement: brass fanfares, a percolating bass and some of the most ferociously funky rhythm-guitar playing ever recorded. A new generation embraced the song in 1997, when the Notorious B.I.G., Puff Daddy and Mase dropped rhymes over the loop in Biggie's "Mo Money, Mo Problems"—the three blinged-out MCs apparently blissfully unaware that they were rapping to one of the gayest songs in the known universe.

Available on: *Diana* (Motown)

19
JUST LIKE HEAVEN
THE CURE
[1987]

Goth gloom-meisters go all wuvvy-duvvy

→ The Cure began their career playing postpunk dirges, and lead singer Robert Smith's ghoul-with-a-frightwig look only deepened their reputation as prophets of gloom. In fact, they were less morose than they seemed; by the late '80s, they were parading their romantic side, never more memorably than on their first American Top 40 hit. Juxtaposing a wistful guitar figure and lush keyboards with jagged bass and drums, "Heaven" strikes the balance of pop shimmer and punk grit for which the Cure were famous (a sound that several thousand young bands are busily trying to copy at this very moment). But it's Smith's puppy love ranting that makes the track; as he yelps about "spinning on the dizzy edge" and "dancing in the deepest ocean," you can practically hear his black eyeliner and white face paint melting away.

Available on: *Kiss Me, Kiss Me, Kiss Me* (Elektra)

20
THE SHOW
DOUG E. FRESH AND THE GET FRESH CREW
[1985]

A human beat box! An eye-patched Brit! The *Inspector Gadget* theme!

→ Early hip-hop was party music first and foremost, and its frenetic, good-time spirit was never better captured than on the landmark 1985 single by Doug E. Fresh and his Get Fresh Crew. Fresh was the world's greatest (and some say the first ever) human beat box, and here he flaunts his chops, imitating a telephone, a roaring tiger and just about every imaginable percussive sound, including a dead-on send-up of a rival beat-boxer from the plus-size crew the Fat Boys. Joining Fresh is sidekick MC Ricky D., a.k.a. Slick Rick, who spits a famous verse involving a pickup on a subway car, Frosted Flakes cereal and the Beatles' "Michelle." When your grandkids ask about the old school, this is the 12" to reach for.

Available on: *Various Artists: Street Jams: Hip-Hop From the Top, Vol. 3* (Bust It)

21
FIGHT THE POWER
PUBLIC ENEMY
[1990]

Hip-hop firebrands like social justice; Elvis, not so much

→ The protest rap of hip-hop's late-'80s era reached its apex with this furious broadside aimed at white institutional power, black complacency and, um, Bobby McFerrin. "Fight the Power" distills the formula that made Public Enemy the greatest political provocateurs in pop history: a combination of dense, visionary production by sound-collage specialists the Bomb Squad, Chuck D's stentorian sloganeering and comic relief by clock-wearing jester Flavor Flav. His voice booming above a howl of old-school soul samples, Chuck spends the first two verses in pep-talk mode ("What we need is awareness, we can't get careless") before hilariously dumping on Elvis, John Wayne and McFerrin's doofy "Don't Worry, Be Happy" in the vicious third. Proof positive that the best polemics come with a hot beat, and a wink.

Available on: *Fear of a Black Planet* (Def Jam)

22
POUR SOME SUGAR ON ME
DEF LEPPARD
[1987]

Hair metal hookmeisters take a bottle, shake it up

→ Part smutty sex-fest, part bundt-cake recipe, this absurd and irresistible hit was one of seven Top 20 singles on Def Leppard's blockbuster 1987 album, *Hysteria*. The Sheffield, England, quintet left its pop-metal competition in the dust, and "Sugar" makes it clear why. They were less a metal band than a power-pop group with poodle hair, and super-producer Jeff "Mutt" Lange gives one of their most hook-filled songs a huge sheen with battering electronic drums, processed vocals and other bombastic effects. Today the song sounds both like a late-'80s period piece and surprisingly prescient: Joe Elliott's vocal anticipates '90s rap-rock, and listening to Rick Allen's clobbering kick drum, it's obvious that more than a few big-beat DJs have spent quality time with Def Lep.

Available on: *Hysteria* (Mercury)

23
IT'S LIKE THAT
RUN-D.M.C.
[1984]

Rap's first superstars foment musical, eyewear revolutions

→ It begins with five rapid-fire drum machine hits—hip-hop's shots heard 'round the world. The 1984 debut by three b-boys from Hollis, Queens, opened a new chapter in pop, abandoning the disco-flavored grooves and suave vocals of early rap for something far tougher: gruff rhymes bellowed over brute, minimalist beats. One of Run-D.M.C.'s few overtly political songs, it surveys a range of global woes—unemployment, warfare, prejudice—returning again and again to a fatalistic chorus: "It's like that, and that's the way it is." The words hit hard, the stark sound was revolutionary and the group's star power was undeniable. Soon, white kids from the 'burbs were wearing Cazal glasses and shouting "Huh!" Hip-hop had found its Beatles.

Available on: *Run-D.M.C.* (Profile)

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24
I COULD NEVER TAKE THE PLACE OF YOUR MAN
PRINCE
[1987]

Prince player-hates on himself, shreds some serious axe

→ After spending most of his career singing about his perversions, crooning come-ons and doing just about anything else to lure young women into his boudoir, Prince recorded, of all things, an anti-seduction, with a surprising message: Don't bother with me, baby, I'm not worth it. A straight-ahead pop-rock song, powered by a seven-note synth line and an indelible melody, it was much less musically eccentric than Prince's previous singles. But it proved, for the hundredth time, that His Royal Badness was simply better at everything than everyone else—a better singer, a better lyricist, a better arranger. And a better guitarist: His torrid solo, filled with shrieking metalisms, must have sent more than a few mulletheads back to the woodshop.

Available on: *Sign "o" the Times* (Paisley Park)

25
NUTHIN' BUT A 'G' THANG
DR. DRE
[1992]

Snoop Dogg and Dr. Dre are at the door ... with George Clinton's synthesizer and a pound of weed

→ Hip-hop's center of gravity shifted west the day that ex-N.W.A scowler Dr. Dre and his protégé Calvin Broadus slinked into earshot, trailing pot smoke. The first single off Dre's 1992 masterpiece, *The Chronic*, "Nuthin'" announced the arrival of G-funk, slowing the strident gangsta rap sound to a stoner's creep, adding trebly, P-Funk-inspired keyboards, a booming bass sample and the sleaziest, most violent lyrics that had ever cracked Top 40 radio. The groove was monstrous, but the real revelation was the instant superstar Snoop, who drawls his rhymes about "pimpin' ho's and clockin' a grip" in a high singsong, a style both dancingly musical and undeniably menacing. Rival producers spent the next few years trying to replicate Dre's G-funk innovations; by the time they caught up, he'd moved on to his next thang.

Available on: *The Chronic* (Death Row)

Biggie, after training carrier birds to bring him his blunts.

26
HYPNOTIZE
NOTORIOUS B.I.G.
[1997]

World's greatest MC gets murdered, tops charts

→ Life is short, but great shit-talking lasts forever. Less than seven weeks after Christopher Wallace was slain at a Los Angeles intersection, he reached No. 1 on the *Billboard* Hot 100 chart with this gangsta-pop bumper about "blunts and broads, tits and bras, ménage-a-trois, sex in expensive cars"—the blueprint for hundreds of hip-hop singles that have followed. Like so many Puff Daddy productions, "Hypnotize" rides a big, obvious sample, this one lifted from Herb Alpert's disco-funk instrumental "Rise." (The chorus, meanwhile, riffs on a refrain from Doug E. Fresh and Slick Rick's "La Di Da Di.") Plus-size hooks have made the song a club favorite, but the main attraction is Biggie's incomparable flow, his flurry of interior rhymes and his premium braggadocio. What other rapper could make his "underroos" sound gangsta?

Available on: *Life After Death* (Bad Boy)

27
JUST A FRIEND
BIZ MARKIE
[1989]

Rotund rap jester sings his woe

→ Rap has had its share of clown princes, but none has embraced the role with more panache than Biz Markie, the roly-poly Harlem-born MC who rapped in a Sylvester the Cat lisp—when he wasn't breaking into wildly out-of-tune singing. His lone Top 10 hit was the ridiculous tale of a college girl (with "9/10 pants and a very big bra") whom the rapper meets at concert, courts in a photo booth and discovers is two-timing him on a surprise visit to her dorm room. Few MCs had ever been willing to make themselves the butt of the joke, and none had ever recorded anything quite like the "Just a Friend" chorus, which Biz warbles manically over plinking piano keys. Nowadays everyone from 50 Cent to Andre 3000 is mixing rapping and singing, but the Biz got there early and had the good sense to play his vocal stylings for laughs.

Available on: *The Biz Never Sleeps* (Cold Chillin')

28
CARS
GARY NUMAN
[1979]

This paranoid android isn't so crazy about his ride

→ Like his new wave peers, British singer-songwriter Gary Numan used cutting-edge musical technology to explore ... the soul-crushing effects of cutting-edge technology. Numan's only stateside hit was a variation on this theme, a portrait of a car-obsessed automaton—"Here in my car/I can only receive/I can listen to you/It keeps me stable for days"—sung in a staccato robo-voice over synth bleeps and honks. The song set the sonic template for early-'80s dance pop, and today Numan is claimed as an influence by everyone from Blur to Trent Reznor. "Cars," meanwhile, has remained a radio staple, and its theme of dystopian alienation hasn't stopped Nissan and Oldsmobile from using the ditty in their TV commercials.

Available on: *The Pleasure Principle* (Beggars Banquet)

29
GET UR FREAK ON
MISSY ELLIOTT
[2001]

Missy and Tim blow ur mind

→ In the late '90s and early '00s, Missy Elliott and Timbaland were hip-hop's most reliable mindblowers: a fearsome tag team who stretched the sonic (and comedic) possibilities of pop. Their most bugged-out collaboration took hip-hop's then-burgeoning fascination with Eastern exotica to a funky extreme. Most producers are content to come up with one good idea and stretch it out, but Tim switches up his beat every other bar, juggling Chinese-sounding keyboard figures, pattering Indian tablas, snippets of Japanese speech and a lurching, groaning bass. Missy is at her most irrepressible, stuttering, squawking, demanding "Silence!," hocking a loogie, hissing "yes" for no particular reason and bragging "Me and Timbaland been hot since 20 years ago"—a preposterous claim you're almost inclined to believe.

Available on: *Miss E ... So Addictive* (Goldmind/Elektra)

MY TOP FIVE

KAREN O
YEAH YEAH YEAHS
[b. 11/22/78]

POISON
BEL BIV DEVOE

AIN'T 2 PROUD 2 BEG
TLC

EVERYBODY
MADONNA

LET THE MUSIC PLAY
SHANNON

HOT ON THE HEELS OF LOVE
THROBBING GRISTLE

BIGGIE: JACK CHUCK/CORBIS OUTLINE; KAREN: PETER BROOKER/REX USA

Prince loved shopping for clothes at Mexican Wrestler Depot.

30
99 PROBLEMS
JAY-Z
[2003]

Jay-Z glides and chuckles through the loudest song of his career

→ No one quite believed Jay-Z when he announced his "retirement" in 2003, but few could argue with his reasoning—he was bored stiff with being rap's undisputed champ. "99 Problems," the big hit from the rapper's putative farewell record, offered further evidence of his mastery: three perfect verses, two packed with boasts and taunts ("You know the type, loud as a motor bike/But wouldn't bust a grape in a fruit fight"), the third a tight little narrative about racial profiling in which Jay-Z plays both himself and a cop. Rick Rubin's beat is ginormous, with thunderclap guitar chords descending over thudding drums, but Hova's wit is more subtle. The song's slyest line is in the chorus—"If you're having girl problems, I feel bad for you, son"—a cutting insult, especially coming from Mr. Beyoncé Knowles.

Available on: *The Black Album* (Roc-A-Fella/Def Jam)

31
I'LL BE THERE FOR YOU/YOU'RE ALL I NEED TO GET BY (PUFF DADDY REMIX)
METHOD MAN FEATURING MARY J. BLIGE
[1995]

Hip-Hop's Marvin and Tammi add a modern edge to an R&B classic

→ In 1995, Method Man and Mary J. Blige had the audacity to stake a claim to one of soul's great love songs, made famous by Marvin Gaye and Tammi Terrell—and they pulled it off. Playing a sensitive thug, Method Man praises his "queen" while Blige croons the chorus. It's a soft ballad, albeit distinctly hip-hop—you can't imagine Gaye demanding that Tammi "never ever give my pussy away" or bragging that he's "above all that romance crap." However, when Meth raps, "Back when I was nothin'/You made a brother feel like he was somethin'," you can't help but feel the love.

Available on: *Various Artists: Def Jam 1985–2001: History of Hip-Hop, Vol. 1* (Def Jam)

32
LIVIN' ON A PRAYER
BON JOVI
[1986]

For girls with big hair and the guys who love them

→ Jon Bon Jovi may have been a hair-metal pinup, but the frosted tresses couldn't conceal his real musical ambition: to usurp Bruce Springsteen as Jersey's blue-collar poet laureate. His first No. 1 hit, written with hugely successful rock de-fanger Desmond Child, was the band's most successful exercise in Boss-worship, a slice of working-class romanticism about the struggles of Tommy (unemployed longshoreman: check) and Gina (diner waitress: check). The lyric could have been by John Cafferty, but the sound is pure pop-metal pomp, mixing a Richie Sambora guitar-hero solo, the most infectious use of vocoder since *Frampton Comes Alive* and JBJ's über-anthemic lead vocal, complete with third-chorus octave-leap—a feat of bombast Bruce himself never dared attempt.

Available on: *Slippery When Wet* (Mercury)

33
NO DIGGITY
BLACKSTREET
[1996]

New Jack creator drops R&B miggity-masterpiece

→ As leader of late-'80s R&B slicksters Guy, songwriter-producer Teddy Riley single-handedly invented the sound of new jack swing, paving the way for all future soul/hip-hop hybrids. His '90s project, Blackstreet, produced one of the decade's funkiest singles in any genre, a love song sung to a streetwise "playette," with a chorus—"I like the way you work it/No diggity/I got to bag it up"—that your parents think is total gibberish. Riley's beat is a wondrous mix of retro and new: a bluesy Bill Withers sample, doo-wop-style four-part harmonies and rumbling gospel piano chords rub up against a ticking computerized beat and a guest rap by Dr. Dre. A century of black music history, collapsed into one five-minute track.

Available on: *Another Level* (Interscope)

34
MYBABYDADDY
B-ROCK AND THE BIZZ
[1997]

Obscure ATLiens drop paternity-drama booty classic

→ Atlanta's B-Rock & the Bizz were one-hit wonders—but what a hit. "MyBabyDaddy" took one of urban America's gravest crises, absentee fathers, and turned it into a novelty duet: a battle of the sexes waged in furious triple-time rhymes over a rattling Miami bass beat. Rapping in thick Dixie drawls, Thaddeus "T-Bird" Maye and Kittie Thomas trade disses, threats and accusations. (He can't understand why the name of her baby's father is Lavall one day and Ken the next; she wants him to "stop trippin'" and give her some money.) The musical refrain is from the Emotions' "The Best of My Love," but the hook is Thomas's nattering of the title phrase. The dissolution of the nuclear family never sounded so funky.

Available on: *Various Artists: And Then There Was Bass: Dis Bass Game Real* (LaFace)

35
CROSSEYED AND PAINLESS
TALKING HEADS
[1980]

Art-school geeks get funky

→ The Rhode Island School of Design isn't a place you associate with funk, but in the mid-'70s, three RISD students moved to New York, got a slot opening for the Ramones at CBGBs and went on to make some of the most ferociously danceable music in pop history. The band's single greatest groove, from their Brian Eno–produced fourth album, is an amazing pile-up of African polyrhythms, punk noise and bizzaro poetry, with razored guitar riffs, congas and cowbells stacked up in a dense wall of sound behind David Byrne's clipped sing-shouting. Today, a new generation (the Rapture, LCD Soundsystem) is reviving that ruggedly funky style, but one listen to "Crosseyed and Painless" will dispel any doubts about where dance-punk came from, and who did it best.

Available on: *Remain in Light* (Sire)

36
IT TAKES TWO
ROB BASE AND DJ E-Z ROCK
[1988]

Harlem rap duo creates dopest beat ever

→ In 1988, a little-known hip-hop duo from Harlem did the impossible: They improved on James Brown. Rob Base and DJ E-Z Rock lifted an exhilarating bass-and-vocal loop from "Think (About It)," a Lyn Collins tune written and produced by the Godfather, and made it even funkier, thickening the bass sound, adding a walloping snare drum, sampled shouts and a barrage of disses and boasts. The result was hip-hop's greatest-ever dance track, one of the first rap records to cross over to R&B radio. Base isn't much of a rhymer ("Bro, I got an ego/Yo, talkin' to me?/No"), but his flow is infectious nonetheless.

Available on: *Various Artists: Jock Jams Vol. 1* (Tommy Boy)

37
BOOTYLICIOUS
DESTINY'S CHILD
[2001]

Lusty lingo from Beyoncé and friends makes the pop charts and the dictionary

→ This 2001 smash tackles one of the supreme spiritual and philosophical issues of our time: the mystic power of Beyoncé Knowles's ass. A worthy topic, to be sure, and Destiny's Child are up to the task, twisting their melisma around taut beats and the jittery guitar riff from Stevie Nicks's "Edge of Seventeen." Kelly and Michelle each take a verse, but this is Beyoncé's show and she has her superstar act down cold; in the way only the haughtiest and best divas can, she makes the song's refrain ("I don't think you're ready for this jelly") sound both sexy and scary. The song's true coronation came a year later, when "bootylicious" was added to the Oxford English Dictionary ("1. A term of commendation in rap lyrics; 2. Very sexually attractive").

Available on: *Survivor* (Columbia)

HAMISH GOLDSMITH

38
I LOVE ROCK & ROLL
JOAN JETT
[1981]

A jukebox jam that sounded like an S&M tryst

→ Badass rock chick Joan Jett toiled in cult obscurity for several years before hitting paydirt with this 1981 cover of a little-known single by British-American band the Arrows. The lyrics are vaguely '50s-retro—there's an almost sock-hop feel to those lines about dancing to the jukebox—but Jett inflates the song into a gargantuan glam-rock anthem, cranking up the electric guitars and layering untold numbers of handclap and vocal overdubs in a thunderous singalong chorus. With her black hair, black eyeliner and black leather pantsuits, Jett looked like a dominatrix, and she sang like one too; listening to her snarling vocal you can't quite tell whether she loves rock & roll or just wants to lash it with a cat-o'-nine-tails and make it lick her boot-heel.

Available on: *I Love Rock & Roll* (Boardwalk)

Waffles the cat prepares to body-slam Joan Jett.

39
MIND PLAYING TRICKS ON ME
GETO BOYS
[1991]

Hardcore rap pioneers go completely insane

→ Houston's Geto Boys—Scarface, Willie D and four-foot-ten gangsta-dwarf Bushwick Bill—pushed rap into horror-movie territory with songs about murder and necrophilia and an album cover featuring a real-life photo of Bushwick, his right eye recently shot out. Their desire to shock sometimes outstripped their skills, but this was brilliant, a frightening vision of gangsta paranoia and mental collapse that influenced a generation of MCs, notably the Notorious B.I.G. Over a languid Isaac Hayes guitar sample, the Boys spin tales of deranged thugs sweating behind drawn curtains, mistaking "blind, crippled and crazy senior citizens" for enemies and generally freaking out. Comic relief comes in a goofy verse about Halloween—but even that doesn't break the song's sinister spell.

Available on: *We Can't Be Stopped* (Rap-a-Lot)

40
PUSH IT
SALT 'N PEPA
[1986]

Before "Let's Talk About Sex," these lusty lady rappers talked about sex

→ This sassy electro-rap classic was a milestone on two counts: It was one of the first big hits by a female hip-hop act, and one of the first rap tracks to top the dance charts. Cheryl "Salt" James and Sandy "Pepa" Denton aren't the world's most technically polished or lyrically inventive MCs, but they've got bucketloads of personality, not to mention libido. ("Can't you hear the music's pumpin' hard like I wish you would?" they rap, sounding none too pleased with their man's performance.) In fact, "Push It" is less a rap song than a hip-hop instrumental, powered by its slinky, snake-charmer-like synthesizer line, hissing high-hats, copious heavy breathing and walloping downbeat. The gals spun many variations on the same sexed-up theme during their early-'90s heyday, but they never topped their first hit, to this day a surefire party-starter.

Available on: *Hot, Cool & Vicious* (Next Plateau)

41
IN THE AIR TONIGHT
PHIL COLLINS
[1981]

The urban legend's bogus, but the drums are undeniable

→ Despite what Eminem's "Stan" says, Phil Collins didn't actually watch anybody let somebody else drown, much less point out the culprit at one of his shows. (Good story, though.) Best known at the time as Genesis's baby-faced drummer-singer, Collins actually wrote "In the Air Tonight" about the 1978 breakup of his first marriage. The song—featuring, at the 3:40 mark, the most titanic drum break ever recorded—has enjoyed a pretty remarkable afterlife, though: After its appearance on his first solo album, it became a minor hit again in 1984 when it was used on *Miami Vice*; Collins performed it at both the London and Philadelphia Live Aid concerts on the same day in 1985; Tupac Shakur sampled it for "Starin' Through My Rear View"; and Collins reprised it with Lil' Kim for a tribute album a few years ago.

Available on: *Face Value* (Atlantic)

42
GOT YOUR MONEY
OL' DIRTY BASTARD
[1999]

Drunken-master-style rapper introduces star producers and the future Mrs. Nas

→ "He was a genius," Pharrell Williams said of the Wu-Tang Clan's loosest cannon. "Got Your Money," the most coherent thing on ODB's bleary-eyed second solo album, was the commercial breakthrough for Williams's production team the Neptunes, and also introduced Kelis, who sings the hook. (She had originally wanted "Money"'s spare boom-and-slap funk for her own record, but they promised her that she could sing on the track no matter who bought it.) Dirty's voice slurs, cracks, splatters and drips like a faulty can of spray-paint, alternately spewing invective, nonsense and come-ons, including the weirdest pickup line ever: "I don't have no trouble with you fuckin' me/But I have a little problem wit' you not fuckin' me."

Available on: *N***a Please* (Elektra)

MY TOP FIVE

CIARA
[b. 3/15/72]

2 OF AMERIKAZ MOST WANTED
TUPAC AND SNOOP DOGG

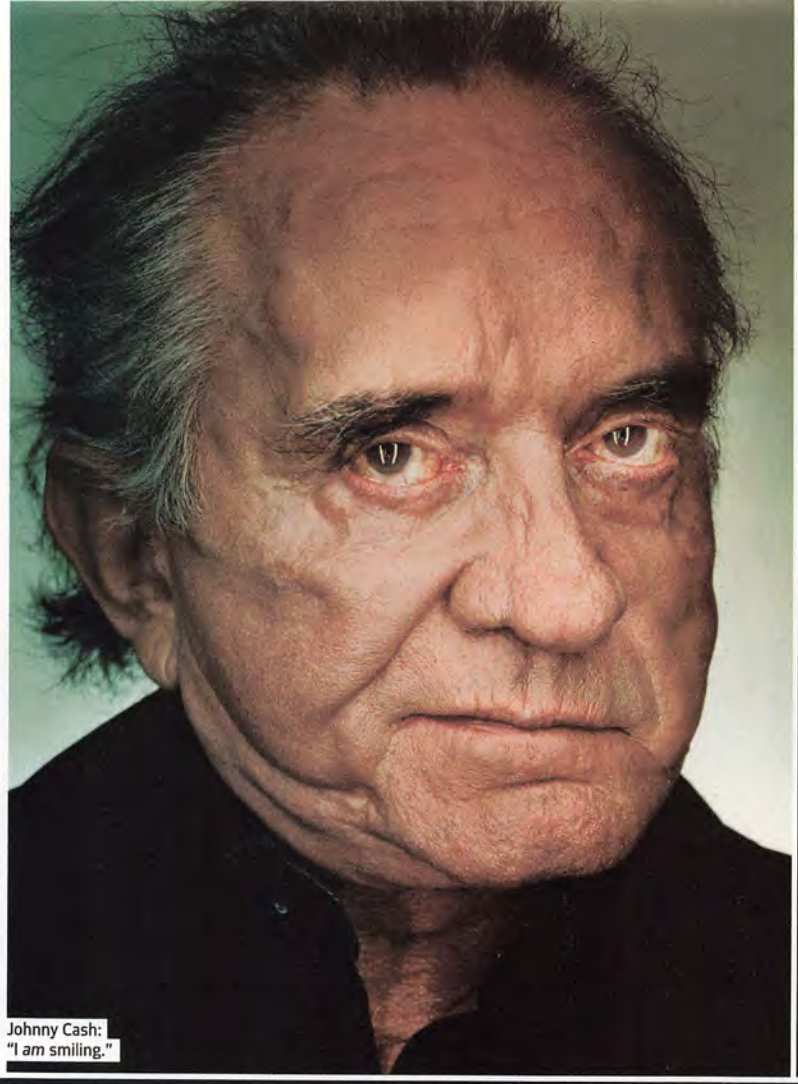
NOTHING
BRANDY

REMEMBER THE TIME
MICHAEL JACKSON

THAT'S THE WAY LOVE GOES
JANET JACKSON

I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
WHITNEY HOUSTON

JETT: LAURA LEVINE; CIARA: ARNOLD TURNER/WIREIMAGE.COM



Johnny Cash: "I *am* smiling."

43
HURT
JOHNNY CASH
[2002]

The last great moment of the Man in Black, penned by the Goth in Black

→ Producer Rick Rubin presented Johnny Cash with some brilliantly unexpected song choices for his final albums, but none more inspired than Nine Inch Nails' "Hurt," whose "heart and soul and pain" Cash praised. On the final album released during Cash's life, his bare-bones performance—just that magisterial croak, ravaged by illness and accompanied by old guitar strings—found chilling intimations of mortality in Trent Reznor's angsty lyrics about addiction and loss. (Reznor has said he hasn't listened to his own version since he heard Cash's.) And Mark Romanek's devastatingly sad video, in which a shaky, 70-year-old Johnny looks back on his vibrant youth and remembers his wife June Carter in her prime, was recently voted "best video ever" in a British poll.

Available on: *American IV: The Man Comes Around* (Lost Highway)

44
WHITE LINES (DON'T DON'T DO IT)
GRANDMASTER FLASH AND MELLE MEL
[1983]

Shady biz and misassigned credits: how appropriate for a song about cocaine!

→ The hardest-banging anti-drug song in hip-hop history was co-credited to DJ Grandmaster Flash, who was then a major freebaser (and didn't actually have anything to do with recording it), and once Melle Mel gets through denouncing the evils of cocaine, he admits that "It's hard as hell to fight it." But who cares about hypocrisy when you've got that groove? It turns out the groove was lifted almost note-for-note from "Cavern" by New York dance band Liquid Liquid. "Something like a phenomenon"—the catchphrase from "White Lines" that was later appropriated by LL Cool J—is an interpretation of Liquid Liquid singer Sal Principato's muttering.

Available on: *Various Artists: The Best of Sugar Hill Records* (Rhino)

Duran Duran: "So, no one can remember where we parked the car?"

45
SEXUAL HEALING
MARVIN GAYE
[1982]

Screwed-up loverman announces his eagerness to "operate"

→ In late 1981, Gaye was a magnificent singer but a coke-addled wreck—keyboardist Odell Brown brought a witness when he played Gaye the instrumental groove that became "Sexual Healing," to make sure he wouldn't get his writing credit stolen. The song didn't get its title until the following March, when visiting journalist David Ritz freaked out over some of the nasty porn Gaye had on hand and told him he needed "sexual healing." The singer took Ritz's phrase to mean that what everyone needs is "to live out their fantasies," and recorded the plaintively blue-balled model for basically every slow jam since then. It became his biggest R&B hit ever, and the last he'd live to see; in April 1984, his father shot and killed him.

Available on: *Midnight Love* (Columbia)

CASH: MARTIN SCHOELLER/CORBIS OUTLINE; DURAN DURAN: LFI

46
FUCK THA POLICE
N.W.A
[1988]

The bullet-riddled cradle of gangsta rap

→ Besides Dr. Dre's most fearsome beat ever, "Fuck tha Police" features a scalding, near-constant stream of profanity (laid end to end, it's 42 seconds worth of don't-even-think-about-playing-this-on-the-radio), as well as Ice Cube's threat of a "blood-bath/Of cops dyin' in L.A."—which is probably why the FBI sent N.W.A's label a letter to the effect that they really weren't happy about it. The group's furious indictment of police racism and brutality put gangsta rap on the map, and launched the careers of Dre, Cube and Eazy-E. What the bluenoses and blue-uniforms didn't notice is that it's also funny as hell—a parody trial of a hapless cop who gets dragged away at the end screaming "I want justice!"

Available on: *Straight Outta Compton* (Priority)

47
I WANT TO KNOW WHAT LOVE IS
FOREIGNER
[1984]

Cold-as-ice rockers put their hearts on their sleeves, let 'em drip

→ Foreigner had made their reputation as a tough, macho hard-rock band, but their biggest hit was this tremulous power ballad about the state of songwriter-guitarist Mick Jones's love life. Singer Lou Gramm says that the band "worried that it might do irreparable damage to our rock image." Still, he belted it like a trouper, backed up by the enormous gospel power of the New Jersey Mass Choir, as well as Broadway star Jennifer Holliday, who just happened to be in the studio when they were recording it. It's a secular gospel anthem (15 years before the Polyphonic Spree!) that could also pass for the real thing: The New Jersey Mass Choir had a Top 40 R&B hit a few months later with their own version.

Available on: *Agent Provocateur* (Atlantic)

48
MONKEY GONE TO HEAVEN
PIXIES
[1989]

Feral Boston quartet invents the grunge ballad

→ It's a mighty eccentric formula for a hit: a spoken rant (except for its five-word chorus) about an "underwater guy" getting killed by tons of sludge, which becomes a frothing-at-the-mouth rant about cosmology, theology and numerology, accompanied by a pounding rock band and a string quartet. The reason "Monkey Gone to Heaven" works is that it acts as if it's a perfectly respectable pop song—singer Black Francis calls for Joey Santiago's string-torturing solo with a "Rock me, Joe," the howling riff is accompanied by little plinky synthesizers and bassist Kim Deal (in her pre-Breeders days) sings "this monkey's gone to heaven" like a come-on. Plenty of alt-rock bands copped the Pixies' ideas during their 11-year break, but few devised anything this majestically bizarre.

Available on: *Doolittle* (4AD)

49
LOSE YOURSELF
EMINEM
[2002]

The "Eye of the Tiger" of hip-hop

→ With Eminem now a global multimedia phenomenon, it's worth remembering just how amazing a rap-writer he is—in the mindbending metrical scheme of "Lose Yourself," he's mostly rhyming four syllables at a time. ("Only grows hotter" rhymes with "known as the globetrotter" and "home, he's no father" and "here goes the cold water" and a dozen other phrases in one verse alone.) And he's telling a third-person, more-or-less autobiographical story at the same time (in *8 Mile*, we see his character Rabbit working out the lyrics)—never mind that the third verse seems to belong before the second. To top it off, it's a bona fide hip-hop hit that was also all over rock radio, thanks to the *Rocky*-theme-style bombast of Eminem's production.

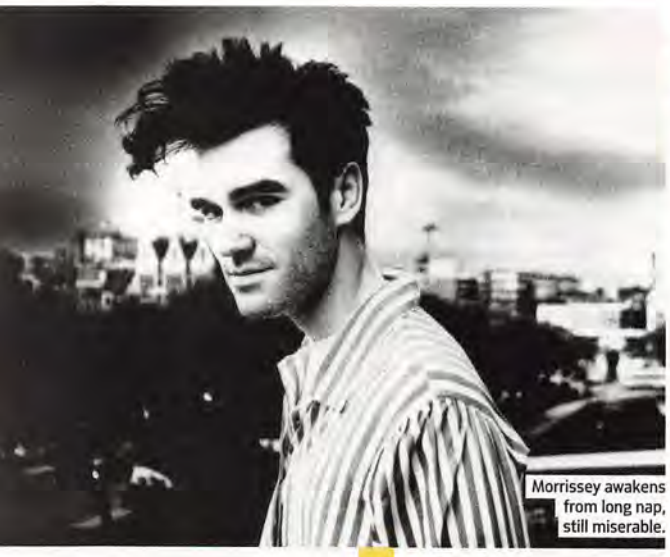
Available on: *8 Mile* soundtrack (Interscope)

50
HUNGRY LIKE THE WOLF
DURAN DURAN
[1982]

The video that made teen idols of five funk-rock Brits

→ Duran Duran initially pitched themselves as a cross between Chic and the Sex Pistols, and new wave–mad England ate up their hybrid of bubbly disco and Andy Taylor's gnashing metalloid guitar. But their second album, *Rio*, initially bombed in the U.S. Then, in the fall of 1982, MTV, which was then popping up on cable systems all over the country, started cranking the heavy-breathing "Hungry Like the Wolf" video (shot in Sri Lanka by director Russell Mulcahy), which showed off the Durans' male-model looks, and pubescent girls across America immediately raced to the nearest mall's record store (and makeup counter). By Christmas, "Wolf" was a Top 5 hit. As keyboardist Nick Rhodes put it, "video to us is like stereo was to Pink Floyd."

Available on: *Rio* (Capitol)



Morrissey awakens from long nap, still miserable.

51
ALL APOLOGIES
NIRVANA
[1994]

Kurt Cobain says he's sorry, then splits

→ Toward the end of his life, Kurt Cobain was pretty explicit about his plans to snuff it and head for that big Nirvana in the sky. But the melody of this dirge went down as easy as a nursery rhyme, and everyone sang along to the suicide-note lyrics. Even if we thought Kurt's breakdown shout ("Married! ... Buried!") was just a henpecked lament, his rasping *MTV Unplugged* rendition made it scarily literal: Five months later he was dead.

Available on: *MTV Unplugged in New York* (DGC)

52
WONDERWALL
OASIS
[1995]

The Gallaghers stop feuding long enough to pledge their love

→ For a moment in the mid-'90s, it looked as if brothers Liam and Noel Gallagher were going to conquer the world, and "Wonderwall" was a big reason why. Named after George Harrison's 1968 solo album, it's a convincing declaration of adoration, and still their biggest hit. In Noel's blunt words: "You can't get bored of 15,000 people shouting for 'Wonderwall' ... You get a hard-on when you hear that."

Available on: *(What's the Story) Morning Glory?* (Epic)

53
BEAT IT
MICHAEL JACKSON
[1982]

The crossover piledriver even metalheads could love

→ Before he became a punch line, Michael Jackson was a magnificent soul singer. An R&B record with a palpable sense of menace and a shredding metal-guitar solo (Eddie Van Halen volunteered his services gratis) was a freaky idea in 1982, but Jackson pounces on every syllable as if being "funky and strong" is enough to win the battle he's describing. The elaborately choreographed video became MTV's *West Side Story*.

Available on: *Thriller* (Epic)

MY TOP FIVE

JOHN TAYLOR
DURAN DURAN
[b. 6/20/60]

BABY, I NEED YOUR LOVIN'
FOUR TOPS

ACADEMY AWARD PERFORMANCE
SPARKS

PLEASE PLEASE ME
THE BEATLES

ANARCHY IN THE U.K.
SEX PISTOLS

EVERYBODY DANCE
CHIC

54
MIDDLE OF THE ROAD
THE PRETENDERS
[1983]

Chrissie Hynde's furious farewell to youth

→ At the end of 1983, the Pretenders had barely recovered from the recent OD deaths of their original lead guitarist and bassist, and leader Chrissie Hynde was angry about the state of the world—and her midlife crisis. But singing "I'm not the cat I used to be/I got a kid, I'm 33," she slid into her harmonica solo with a tigerish snarl—and presented her complaint as blistering garage-rock.

Available on: *Learning to Crawl* (Warner Bros.)

55
THE SCIENTIST
COLDPLAY
[2002]

It's all downhill from here, says Chris Martin

→ Singer Chris Martin calls "The Scientist" "perhaps the most beautiful song we will have ever written," and initially threatened not to make another Coldplay record because he didn't think he could top it. A Radiohead-esque love-and-apology song with piano and strings, it has a couple of aces up its sleeve in Martin's arcing, wordless cries and the buzzing waves of guitar from Jonny Buckland.

Available on: *A Rush of Blood to the Head* (Capitol)

56
POISON
BELL BIV DEVOE
[1990]

Studly, swaggering hip-hop/R&B hybrid

→ When the three least-known members of New Edition split off to form their own group in 1988, their first single became this million-selling paragon of new jack swing, a funky admonition to "never trust a big butt and a smile." Sadly, BBD's career was short-lived, possibly because people couldn't remember their slogan—"mentally hip-hop smoothed out on the R&B tip with a pop feel appeal to it"—and kept trying to add "on a sesame-seed bun."

Available on: *Poison* (MCA)

57
WEST END GIRLS
PET SHOP BOYS
[1986]

Disaffected new wavers rap their way to fame

→ Bored-sounding, weedy-voiced British music scribe Neil Tennant was an unlikely MC, but inspired by Grandmaster Flash's "The Message," he wrote a rap about class tension ("East End boys" are poor, "West End girls" are rich). With American disco producer Bobby O, Tennant and Chris Lowe devised an arrangement involving "Barry White chords" and a drum part from Michael Jackson's "Billie Jean"; a re-recorded version hit No. 1 in America.

Available on: *Please* (Capitol)

58
KARMA POLICE
RADIOHEAD
[1997]

Rock's most serious band make with the funny

→ As lugubriously as Thom Yorke sings it, "Karma Police" is one of the rare flashes of goofiness in the grimly technological landscape of *OK Computer*—the title started as a band in-joke, and the lyrics actually include the word "phew." The ornate, lumbering arrangement of what Yorke calls "a song against bosses" paraphrases the Beatles' "Sexy Sadie"; the squealing cone of noise it dissolves into is a loop of a few notes from Ed O'Brien's guitar.

Available on: *OK Computer* (Capitol)

59
HOW SOON IS NOW?
THE SMITHS
[1985]

Their greatest hit started out as a B-side

→ Part of Morrissey and Johnny Marr's original plan was that every Smiths single would start with an instantly recognizable guitar introduction, none of which is more striking than the tremolo riff that opens "How Soon Is Now?" Originally a bonus track on the "William, It Was Really Nothing" single, "Soon" was their first U.S. hit, and became a dance standard—ironic for a song about leaving a club alone and depressed.

Available on: *Meat Is Murder* (Warner Bros.)

60
MISSING YOU
JOHN WAITE
[1984]

A deep-soul scorcher in new wave drag

→ British singer Waite scored a No. 1 single with "Missing You" during his first foray as a solo artist—between fronting power-pop outfit the Babys in the late '70s and corporate hacks Bad English a decade later. The song came to him very quickly—"pure word association ... like sleepwalking," he said. It's the apotheosis of the mid-'80s power ballad: half ragged torch song (cf. Tina Turner's cover), half gangly synth-pop groove.

Available on: *No Brakes* (Capitol)

61
IGNITION (REMIX)
R. KELLY
[2003]

R. sticks his key in, spends the weekend freakin'

→ How many levels of genius are there here? A remix that announces that it's the remix in the chorus, then ditches almost all of "Ignition" itself; a singer with image problems declaring that he's kicking back and boozing it up for the weekend; vocals that evoke everything from purring seduction to dancehall reggae harshness in a matter of seconds; and the most lusciously summery porn-flick wah-wah in Kelly's entire repertoire.

Available on: *Chocolate Factory* (Jive)

MORRISSEY: LFI; TAYLOR: LXL/REX USA

62
JUST CAN'T GET ENOUGH
DEPECHE MODE
[1981]

The original British synth-pop band exercise their index fingers

→ Depeche Mode didn't start out as a synthesizer band, but after they had played a few gigs, member Andrew Fletcher has explained, they realized synths were "perfect for one-fingered keyboard playing—which was about all we could do." Original songwriter Vince Clarke (later of Erasure) bowed out after this, their third single, a perky love song built around tootling, hunt-and-peck keyboard parts.

Available on: *Speak & Spell* (Warner Bros.)

63
BEAUTIFUL DAY
U2
[2000]

How wanking off in the studio sometimes leads to global hits

→ During a jam on another song, "Always," Bono yelled "it's a beautiful day," and producer Daniel Lanois turned it into a chorus. The song gelled around that line: a vision of abandoning materialism and finding grace in the world itself. Lanois described it as "one of those little gifts where you think, my god, we've got it!" The single went on to top charts around the globe and win three Grammys.

Available on: *All That You Can't Leave Behind* (Interscope)

Lauryn Hill: Good at singing and rapping, very bad at catching.

64
SAY MY NAME
DESTINY'S CHILD
[1999]

State-of-the-art technology, and Beyoncé's deepest performance

→ By the time "Say My Name" began its three weeks at No. 1, it was obvious that Destiny's Child was Beyoncé Knowles and Some Other Gals—between its recording and video shoot, two members were replaced, and few listeners noticed. But the song's real star is its writer-producer, Rodney Jerkins, whose arrangement closes in like suspicion on Knowles's voice, gliding from acoustic simplicity to orchestral funk.

Available on: *The Writing's on the Wall* (Columbia)

65
ENTER SANDMAN
METALLICA
[1991]

The kings of darkness pound their stake into the radio

→ Before "Enter Sandman," Metallica were a spiky, radio-unfriendly alternative to frothy hair-metal. With the release of 1991's eponymous "black album," and especially their first actual hit, they crushed the competition altogether. Originally about crib death until James Hetfield altered a particularly creepy lyric, "Sandman" applied Metallica's pulverizing, swinging attack to pop hooks for the first time, and made them the world's biggest metal band.

Available on: *Metallica* (Elektra)

66
DOO WOP (THAT THING)
LAURYN HILL
[1998]

Ex-Fugee's take on the battle of the sexes

→ Hill was the rookie of the year in '98—everyone knew she could sing and MC, but the Grammy-winning "Doo Wop" was her solo debut's high-kick, an even-handed lecture on gender relations with phenomenal verbal acrobatics (nearly every line rhymes) and vocal fireworks. And the production—a hip-hop update of the warm, horn-punctuated sound of '60s soul? L-Boogie did it herself.

Available on: *The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill* (Ruffhouse/Columbia)

67
THE BOYS OF SUMMER
DON HENLEY
[1984]

A driving song with the '70s receding in its rear-view mirror

→ Written around an instrumental demo by guitarist Mike Campbell, this epitaph for the Californian hippie dream "came just screamin' out of me," Henley says. "I was jumping up and down in the car—I knew I had something." Its synth-pop pulse looked away from Henley's Eagles career and toward the future; the Ataris and DJ Sammy both had hits with covers of the song in 2003.

Available on: *Building the Perfect Beast* (Geffen)

68
THAT'S THE JOINT
FUNKY 4 + 1
[1981]

Sha Rock + 4 rock the house like it'd never been rocked before

→ Sharon Jackson, a.k.a. Sha Rock, was one of the first women to rap at Bronx parties, and by 1979 she'd joined the Funky Four. (When they got a fourth male MC, she became the +1.) On the first rap performed on national TV (a 1981 *Saturday Night Live* appearance), the 4+1 toss party rhymes around like a team of jugglers for 10 minutes; Doug Wimbish of the Sugar Hill house band provides the acrobatic funk bass part.

Available on: *Various Artists: The Best of Sugar Hill Records* (Rhino)

69
YOU'RE STILL THE ONE
SHANIA TWAIN
[1997]

A.k.a. "Theme for Holding Hands With Your Snookums"

→ Written by Twain and husband/producer Mutt Lange, the least ironic song of the '90s was inescapable for what seemed like centuries, and it's still reportedly the most frequent request for slow dances at weddings. So be it: Twain's years as a country singer taught her how to make anything sound poignant, Lange's arrangement is creamier than a bridal gown and goddamn it, it *is* romantic.

Available on: *Come on Over* (Mercury Nashville)

70
SUMMER OF '69
BRYAN ADAMS
[1984]

A summer single about looking back on summers past

→ In the summer of 1969, Bryan Adams was nine years old, and not likely to have been in a band with somebody who quit to get married—he's described this song as "more [songwriting partner Jim Vallance's] time frame than mine." (A dirty mind suspects the title shouldn't have an apostrophe in it.) But the raspy Canadian rocker's reminiscence managed to make people who hadn't yet had either a first love or a first band nostalgic for the experience.

Available on: *Reckless* (A&M)

REGAN CAMERON/CORBIS OUTLINE

Fiona Apple doesn't fall far from the tree.

71
CRIMINAL
FIONA APPLE
[1996]

Hot teen singer-songwriter has been a bad, bad girl

→ Apple claims that "Criminal" is about "feeling bad for getting something so easily by using your sexuality," and that Mark Romanek's video for it (showing the singer-pianist writhing under amateur-porn lights) was supposed to be tongue-in-cheek. But viewers heard "I've been a bad, bad girl," saw a skinny 19-year-old in her underwear and, well ... stardom came rather easily, for reasons that didn't have much to do with the song or Apple's stormy performance.

Available on: *Tidal* (Epic)

72
THE HUMPTY DANCE
DIGITAL UNDERGROUND
[1990]

The goofiest MC on the West Coast stumbles into the spotlight

→ Digital Underground leader Shock-G created the nasal Humpty Hump character as a joke, but when Jacobs found a Groucho Marx prop nose and glasses during a video shoot, Humpty became the group's star. Over a foundation-rattling bass loop and a P-Funk chorus, he explains his fondness for spastic dancing, lumpy oatmeal and words that "don't mean nothin', like 'looptid.'"

Available on: *Sex Packets* (Tommy Boy)

73
HOUSE OF JEALOUS LOVERS
THE RAPTURE
[2003]

Cool kids soak the dance floor with sweat and PBR

→ This is the sound of lovesick Brooklyn hipsters throwing a dance party on the eve of the New York City housing-bubble apocalypse. Produced by local dance-punk impresario James Murphy, this club slammer mixed prematurely jaded barfly anxiety with the infectious, gritty pound of house music. Singer Luke Jenner's yelps and screams sound like a puppy caught in a warehouse loft fire.

Available on: *Echoes* (DFA)

74
TAKE ME OUT
FRANZ FERDINAND
[2004]

Scottish quartet's murderous funk-rock split personality

→ Two, two, two songs in one! The first minute of "Take Me Out" is lithe, pulsing rock that out-Strokes the Strokes. Then it slows down, bulks up and turns into a hot, brittle guitar-funk stomp for three more minutes—"music for girls to dance to," in the words of singer Alex Kapranos. It's debatable, though, whether most of the people dancing to it have noticed that it's about snipers aiming at each other.

Available on: *Franz Ferdinand* (Epic)

75
HEAD LIKE A HOLE
NINE INCH NAILS
[1989]

Synth-pop dons industrial battle armor

→ Trent Reznor's breakthrough hit took a long time to catch on, but by 1992 the debut album it anchored had gone gold, and it's currently triple-platinum—and out of print, thanks to tussles with his former label. But its twin choruses—one a synth-funk revenge threat, the other a scalding declaration of defiance—bring fashionistas and industrial shockheads together on the dance floor, and its sneaky Latin beat keeps them there.

Available on: *Pretty Hate Machine* (TVT)

76
YOU DROPPED A BOMB ON ME
THE GAP BAND
[1982]

Black cowboys drop the big one on the dance floor

→ Cowboy-suited brothers Charlie, Ronnie and Robert Wilson were the greatest funk band ever to come out of Tulsa, Oklahoma. A whomping party anthem about the joys of anticipating World War III by getting thoroughly wasted and laid (hey, it was 1982), "Bomb" sounds like P-Funk trapped inside a Space Invaders console, and its monstrous bassline inspired the bounce of West Coast hip-hop.

Available on: *Ultimate Collection* (Hip-O)

MY TOP FIVE

BEN GIBBARD
DEATH CAB FOR CUTIE
[b. 8/11/76]

THERE SHE GOES
THE LA'S

ALCOHOLIDAY
TEENAGE FANCLUB

FALL ON ME
R.E.M.

GOOD MORNING CAPTAIN
SLINT

FIGHT THE POWER
PUBLIC ENEMY

77
GIRLS, GIRLS, GIRLS
MÖTLEY CRÜE
[1987]

Party monsters' tribute to the titty bars they loved best

→ Hard-touring bands know that if you name-check a bunch of cities in your song, it's more likely to get played on the radio. On their fourth album's raunchy title track—in between inhaling inch-thick rails of coke—the Crüe did something even smarter. They name-checked their favorite strip clubs, and so insured that wherever bottle-blondes with implants peel off bikinis, it'll always be 1987, and hair-metal will always reign supreme.

Available on: *Girls, Girls, Girls* (Hip-O)

78
A STROKE OF GENIUS
FREELANCE HELLRAISER
[2001]

The mashup that made everybody else want to try them

→ It wasn't the first mashup, but when DJ/producer Roy Kerr had the inspiration of synching up the a cappella track of Christina Aguilera's "Genie in a Bottle" with the instrumental parts of the Strokes' "Hard to Explain," he kicked off the "bastard pop" craze. Never legitimately released, "A Stroke of Genius" turned up on every self-respecting geek's iPod anyway.

Available: online only

79
LOSING MY RELIGION
R.E.M.
[1991]

Mandolin, mumbling and misgivings make magic

→ Guitarist Peter Buck claims that "Losing My Religion" "really became a hit by fluke"—it's an inscrutable ramble with a mandolin as its lead instrument, recorded at a time when R.E.M. were trying to get away from their Big Rock reputation. That's true—but it's also one of Michael Stipe's richest performances. It seeps and suffuses instead of rocking, and its emotional (if not literal) sense is unmistakable.

Available on: *Out of Time* (Warner Bros.)

80
HOT IN HERRE
NELLY
[2002]

The favorite jam at crunk clubs with busted air conditioners

→ The king of the St. Lunatics says that he and his producers the Neptunes "were trying to create that perfect party ... a hook that everybody can really reach out to." It seems to have worked: The wave of semi-nudity that swept American clubs in the summer of 2002 is generally credited to Nelly's call-and-response with hypnotized-sounding backup singer Dani Stevenson ("I am ... gettin' so hot ..."), which played on the radio every five minutes.

Available on: *Nellyville* (Universal)

APPLE: TERRY DOYLE/CORBIS OUTLINE; GIBBARD: AUTUMN DE WILDE

81
GALANG
M.I.A.
[2004]

Sri Lankan femme fatale mounts a thundering, robotic dance attack

→ You'd be hard-pressed to find a better example of global cool than this club hit by British rapper Maya Arulpragasam. The Sri Lankan–born MC speaks the slang of London's reggae and grime music, but her sloganeering about poverty and arty uprising puts her in a new category of radical chic. Over a clackety-clack track punctuated by Nintendo blips, she blurs the line between gunfire and purple haze.

Available on: *Arular* (XL)

82
YEAH!
USHER
[2004]

The crunk-soul floor-filler nobody could escape last year

→ Usher got top billing on the party-infidelity anthem of 2004. But the real stars of "Yeah!" were fellow Atlantans Lil Jon and Ludacris—Jon furnished the minimalist production and eggs on Usher's confession with throat-shredding bellows, while Luda growls a lascivious verse. "Yeah!" became the National Anthem of Crunk—it was No. 1 on the Hot 100 charts for 12 weeks.

Available on: *Confessions* (Arista)

83
TO HELL WITH POVERTY
GANG OF FOUR
[1981]

British art punks get funky on your capitalist ass

→ These Leeds art students could be called "inimitable" if bands like Bloc Party and the Rapture hadn't imitated their minimalist funk-punk so often. With few words, this herky-jerky nugget hints that any war on poverty can easily become a war on the poor. Then we all get to whip-dance and shout the totally reasonable solution, "We'll get drunk on cheap wine!"

Available on: *A Brief History of the Twentieth Century* (Warner Bros.)

84
BORDERLINE
MADONNA
[1983]

Ms. Ciccone goes crazy in love

→ Already famous in her own mind, a willful young Madonna fired her swanky producer and remixed one of his best tunes to her satisfaction with her lover-pal Jellybean Benitez. The chimey, Latin-inflected track made a perfect backdrop for the rooftop video that followed the bleach-blond imp as she graffiti-bombed tenement walls, posed in her torn thrift-store finery for a smitten paparazzo and canoodled with a swarthy himbo over the gritty Manhattan skyline.

Available on: *Madonna* (Sire)

85
DROP IT LIKE IT'S HOT
SNOOP DOGG
[2004]

Snizzle Dizzle comes back with an anti-crunk chunk of perfection

→ Late last year, something strange happened to pop radio: Every hour or so, it got real quiet. On Snoop's first No. 1 single in years, producer Pharrell Williams whips up a futuristic club banger-cum-lullaby made out of little more than electronic hiss and clucking tongues, while the Doggfather rhymes as if he's exhaling one long wisp of smoke.

Available on: *R&G: Rhythm & Gangsta: The Masterpiece* (Geffen)

86
WORK IT
MISSY ELLIOTT
[2002]

Missy Elliott stays on the scene like an (overworked) sex machine

→ With this squelchy club track, Missy Elliott put the script down, flipped it and reversed it—she made a dance hit while reminding us that sex can be hard labor. Lyrics like "If you got a big *ugh*, lemme search it/To find out how hard I gotta work ya" sound like a sex worker filing an OSHA claim, while Timbaland's beats stutter like a john's heart pumping towards a high-priced orgasm.

Available on: *Under Construction* (Elektra)

87
INTO THE GROOVE
MADONNA
[1984]

Dance, dammit, dance!

→ Madonna is not just asking you to dance, she's *commanding* you to "get into the groove" to prove your love. Luckily, she's given you her most danceable song for the audition. Sounding totally at home amid woodblock percussion and sunset synths, young Madge's voice bursts with the optimism of early evening. Released as a single, the song made the soundtrack of *Desperately Seeking Susan*, in which Madonna played a pushy, charming babe—not much of a stretch, really.

Available on: *Like a Virgin* (Sire)

88
PULL UP TO THE BUMPER
GRACE JONES
[1981]

Bumper sticker: "I'd rather be bumper sticking"

→ With a statuesque physique, severe flattop and cheekbones sharp as ninja stars, androgynous Jamaican singer-model Grace Jones ruled New York's raunchy late-'70s nightclub circuit. After disco died, she switched to reggae-inflected new wave funk, working in Nassau with producers Sly & Robbie to record this dark, dubby exhortation, calling for someone with a "long black limousine" to "drive it in-between."

Available on: *Nightclubbing* (Island)

89
ROCKIN' IN THE FREE WORLD
NEIL YOUNG
[1989]

Neil Young gets his Zack de la Rocha on, millions miss the point

→ America, fuck yeah! No, wait—America, fuck no! Just like Bruce Springsteen's "Born in the U.S.A.," this guitar rant smuggled Neil Young's blistering critique of the consumerist powers that be onto mainstream radio via a hooky, urgently whined chorus. Trouble was, the patriotic simpletons shouting along never quite took its meaning, which is why you still hear it at stadiums while Coke ads flash on the Jumbotron.

Available on: *Freedom* (Reprise)

RAMONE: LAURA LEVINE; SNOOP: GREGORY PACE/FILMMAGIC.COM

BY THE NUMBERS

THE 500 GREATEST SONGS SINCE YOU WERE BORN, CRUNCHED FOR YOUR EDUCATION AND AMUSEMENT

24
ARTISTS OR MAIN BAND MEMBERS WHO ARE NO LONGER WITH US

12.5
PERCENTAGE OF THE DECEASED WHO WERE RAMONES

7
SONGS ABOUT CARS

6
SONGS ABOUT BOOTY

1
SONGS ABOUT SLICING ONE'S OWN EYEBALL IN TRIBUTE TO LUIS BUNUEL'S 1929 SURREALIST FILM *UN CHIEN ANDALOU*

1
NUMBER OF SONGS ON THE LIST BY CHAKA DEMUS AND PLIERS

0
NUMBER OF SONGS ON THE LIST BY DAVID BOWIE

40
EAST COAST RAPPERS ON THE TOP 500 LIST

13
WEST COAST RAPPERS ON THE TOP 500 LIST

2
NUMBER OF ARTISTS WHO APPEARED AT WOODSTOCK

4
NUMBER OF ARTISTS WHO APPEARED ON THE TV PROGRAM *HIT ME BABY ONE MORE TIME*

39
NUMBER OF ONE-HIT WONDERS WONDROUSLY REPRESENTED HERE BY THEIR ONE HIT

3
BLENDER STAFFERS WHO THREATENED TO QUIT OVER THE INCLUSION OF AEROSMITH'S CHEESE-EPIC "DON'T WANT TO MISS A THING"

0
STAFFERS WHO HAD THE BALLS TO FOLLOW THROUGH

STEVE KANDELL

The Jam's camping trip got ... weird.

90
THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT
THE JAM
[1980]

Dapper postpunk band lament weak TV shows, fascism

→ Jam leader Paul Weller was too young to experience the original mod boom, but he could still wear the suits and affect the gloom in a late-'70s England short on jobs. Anxiety about "a smash of glass and the rumble of boots" underpins this hard-strummed acoustic chunk of flat-block ennui, which Weller supposedly scribbled in 10 minutes while drunk.

Available on: *Sound Affects* (Polydor)

91
FEEL GOOD HIT OF THE SUMMER
QUEENS OF THE STONE AGE
[2000]

Detailed toxicology report from Desert-based stoner auteurs

→ With all these pounding tom-toms and this distorted guitar, we can hardly remember our grocery list. Oh, here it is: "Nicotine, valium, vicodin, marijuana, ecstasy and alcohol ... c-c-c-cocaine." Josh Homme spits an A-Z of intoxicants, with help from Judas Priest's Rob Halford.

Available on: *R* (Interscope)

92
HEARTBEAT
TAANA GARDNER
[1981]

Slo-mo disco groove revs up the Paradise Garage

→ This song's throbbing beat might be the closest disco ever got to being chopped and screwed. Taana Gardner, an accidental diva who scored her first hit, "Work That Body," as a last-minute studio substitute, sounds like a combination of Diana Ross and the sexiest girl from the block doing karaoke. Ini Kamoze's "Here Comes the Hot-stepper" samples the track, and Kanye's been messing with it too.

Available on: *The West End Story, Vol. I* (West End)

MY TOP FIVE

TOM DELONGE
BLINK-182
[b. 12/13/75]

HOPE
DESCENDENTS

I MELT WITH YOU
MODERN ENGLISH

WHERE THE STREETS HAVE NO NAME
U2

STRANGER THAN FICTION
BAD RELIGION

MERCHANDISE
FUGAZI

93
CUT YOUR HAIR
PAVEMENT
[1994]

Indie-rock snobs admit they care a lot about the drummer's hair

→ Written by brainy pretty boy Stephen Malkmus, whom Courtney Love once called "the Grace Kelly of indie rock," this collection of lyrics turns interior-monologue fragments into sneering reflections on fame, coolness, career anxiety and hip haircuts. A cathartic, sing-along chorus mocks the poppiness that this arch-hipster band would go on to ignore as it slouched further and further away from the mainstream.

Available on: *Crooked Rain, Crooked Rain* (Matador)

94
SET ADRIFT ON MEMORY BLISS
P.M. DAWN
[1991]

Jersey rap softies sample new wave torch song

→ Even in the daisy-sniffing hip-hop world of the early '90s, you had to have blossoms of steel to rap over the schmaltzy strings and sighs of Spandau Ballet's "True." But Prince Be sent listeners into reveries with his tale of unrequited love, and also birthed the trend of much tougher guys like Puff Daddy and Eminem rapping over soft tunes by the likes of Sting and Dido.

Available on: *Of the Heart, of the Soul and of the Cross: The Utopian Experience* (Gee Street)

95
UNSATISFIED
THE REPLACEMENTS
[1984]

Midwestern punk-poet howls from a snow fort of the soul

→ The Replacements' Minneapolis was a dead-end hamlet only made bearable by whiskey and crude jokes. That kind of frostbit isolation provided this petulant anthem of despair from 1984's classic *Let It Be*, full of echoing guitar that sounds as if it was recorded in a rusty grain elevator. The best part: Westerberg is so helpless he can't even claim his own unhappiness, croaking, "Look me in the eye then, and tell me/that I'm satisfied."

Available on: *Let It Be* (Twin/Tone)

96
TRUE FAITH
NEW ORDER
[1987]

A Manchester band with a tragic history get on down

→ After Joy Division singer Ian Curtis snuffed it in 1980, his bandmates could have been a great goth band. They chose instead to make slightly ominous dance music and spent the '80s getting popular with darksiders plagued by intermittent good moods. After the opening industrial thwack on their first U.S. hit, the bouncy bass pulse and keyboard swirl get bodies swaying too blissfully to worry that "our valued destiny comes to nothing."

Available on: *Substance* (Qwest)

97
SINCE U BEEN GONE
KELLY CLARKSON
[2004]

A heat-seeking missile aimed at bad ex-boyfriends everywhere

→ It's always better to rock out than to fade away. Snatching fame from the jaws of obscurity, *American Idol* cutie Kelly Clarkson ditched the bland teenpop of her first outing for, well, a more rocking version of teenpop. Swedish hitmaker Max Martin wrote her a declaration of independence that steadily builds to a huge guitar blast-off chorus, with a thousand multi-tracked Kellys making breaking up sound like being born.

Available on: *Breakaway* (RCA)

98
WHEN YOU WERE MINE
PRINCE
[1980]

Pervy funk upstart loves too much

→ Years before Tipper Gore flipped out about "Darling Nikki" masturbating with a magazine, Prince's breakthrough album *Dirty Mind* described a rocking uptown where kinky people loved to go downtown. Here, over a slapping backbeat and perky synth, our New Romantic imp hornily stalks an ex-lover, even though she spent all his money, wore all his clothes, forced him into threesomes with her new crush and didn't even have the decency to change the sheets.

Available on: *Dirty Mind* (Warner Bros.)

99
COME AS YOU ARE
NIRVANA
[1991]

Kurt follows up an infectious howl with one creepy moan.

→ The second single from Nirvana's 1991 blockbuster *Nevermind* followed "Smells Like Teen Spirit"'s exploding ennui with a somber singalong that was way scarier. Over Krist Novoselic's loping bass line, Kurt Cobain slurs out a back-handed invitation to a shadowy friend who's either a memory or an enemy. On the coda, Kurt swore he didn't have a gun, but everyone figured he probably did.

Available on: *MTV Unplugged in New York* (DGC)

100
BRING THE NOISE
PUBLIC ENEMY
[1988]

Noisy rap classic wakes up the comatose

→ "Bass!" rapper Chuck D bellowed, but this anthem relies on high-end debris for its menace, not a fat bottom. Over looping siren squeals and backwards horns, Chuck shoved Farrakhan into the face of the nation and blasted the "corrupt as a senator" status quo. (Unfortunately, when he exhorted, "Beat is for Sonny Bono/Beat is for Yoko Ono," Fred Durst thought it was for him, too, and went on to neuter "Noise" with a limpbizkit live cover.)

Available on: *It Takes a Nation of Millions to Hold Us Back* (Def Jam)

JAM: PETER ANDERSON/S.I.N./CORBIS; DELONGE: ESTEVAN ORIOL

Grace Jones: So horny!

101
I GOT A MAN
POSITIVE K
[1992]

Rapper pays the bills with his stalking skills

→ In the heyday of whimsical rap like the Fresh Prince's "Parents Just Don't Understand," Bronx rapper Positive K made novelty loot by playfully dogging sassy ladies. But "I Got a Man" gives the women the upper hand. Of course Pos K always saved the most memorable catchphrases for himself: He follows the title's repeated rejection with the hilarious rejoinder, "What's your man got to do with me?"

Available on: *Various Artists: MTV Party to Go, Vol. 3* (Tommy Boy)

102
LOSING MY EDGE
LCD SOUNDSYSTEM
[2002]

If you get the joke, the joke is on you

→ The debut single by producer James Murphy put his post-postpunk production team the DFA on the map with a dance record that morphs into guitar rock and back again. Murphy's rant skewers aging hipsters, indie know-it-alls, electronic arrivistes, obsessive record collectors and anybody who recognizes more than three of the way-too-cool bands he name-checks at the end, i.e., music geeks just like him.

Available on: *LCD Soundsystem* (DFA/Capitol)

103
SABOTAGE
BEASTIE BOYS
[1994]

Hip-hop's O.G. honkeys whip up some whopping punk-rock, dress like cops

→ The Beasties had rhymed over big guitars before, but here they hit big playing their own. Unwittingly presaging the rap-rock that would follow, nasal brat Adam Horowitz yells his punk-rock heart out about haters while drums pound over car-thief screech. Best video moment: The Beasties, directed by Spike Jonze, take a classic sedan airborne with a triple-threat holler and a monster riff.

Available on: *Ill Communication* (Grand Royal)

104
WELCOME TO THE JUNGLE
GUNS N' ROSES
[1987]

L.A. rockers stomp out hair-metal glam

→ Compared to, say, Ice Cube's "How to Survive in South Central," this groove-metal ode to the Los Angeles streets isn't exactly scary. But with its down & dirty guitar riff, sneering misogynist threats and an angry stutter jacked from Led Zeppelin's "Nobody's Fault but Mine," the song succeeded in bringing L.A.'s Aqua Net metal scene to its kn-n-n-n-nees.

Available on: *Appetite for Destruction* (Geffen)

105
FASCINATED
COMPANY B
[1986]

Vice City disco troupe write song about schlongs

→ In the world of Latin-inflected dance music of the '80s called "freestyle," there were two reigning schools: Miami and New York. Guess which one was more fun? Miami producer Ish Ledesma worked up this deliciously hedonistic track, which overlays bright Euro-disco synths with woodblock clave rhythms. The addition of three glamorous, platinum-wigged singers and the lyric, "I'm fascinated by your love toy" made it unstoppable pop.

Available on: *Various Artists: Freestyle Explosion Vol. 1* (Thump)

106
LITTLE RED CORVETTE
PRINCE
[1983]

Sure, it's about cars (wink, wink, nudge)

→ Dirty-minded singers have often used wild horses and fast cars as stand-ins for naughty bits. But in this funky scorcher, Prince hooks up with a woman who has both a flashy chassis *and* a "place where [her] horses run free." We're just guessing those steeds are condoms and the "little red love machine" is a certain part of the female anatomy. Is "baby you're much too fast" a compliment or a complaint? It hardly matters.

Available on: *1999* (Warner Bros.)

LAURA LEVINE

107
FELL IN LOVE WITH A GIRL
THE WHITE STRIPES
[2001]

Two Detroiters out-cool the Strokes, out-fun the Hives

→ Were they brother and sister? Married? Divorced? Detroit's White duo—virtuoso guitarist Jack and his junkyard drummer Meg—like to keep audiences guessing. Of course, when this garage-rock love confession exploded onto radio like a stove-top Jiffy Pop, their creation myth didn't matter: Audiences just wanted to pogo. Also, check out the Michel Gondry video, which animates the Stripes as Lego figures.

Available on: *White Blood Cells* (Sympathy for the Record Industry)

108
STILL NOT A PLAYER
BIG PUNISHER
[1998]

Gigantic rapper swears fidelity, eats himself to death

→ The clean version of this 1998 jeep-bumper is better than the dirty one. Anyone can "fuck"—but the bowdlerized replacement, "crush," presumably suited the late Boricua fatso's boudoir moves better. This song's stinging electric piano vamp, castanet clack and butta-nasty chorus, topped by Bronx shout-outs and bubbly-poppin' foreplay, make imminent rough sex with a 400-plus-pound sadist sound almost tempting.

Available on: *Capital Punishment* (RCA)

109
CREEP
RADIOHEAD
[1993]

British band smuggles a War of the Worlds sound effect into crybaby anthem

→ In what seemed like a genteel British response to Nirvana, head 'Head Thom Yorke mumbled his way toward a chorus that proclaimed his epic worthlessness. This sentiment echoed grunge's go-eat-worms mentality, but it was the song's terrifying, industrial-sized stapler sound (CHUCKA ... CHUGGA!!) that smashed the pity-party haze. That masterful use of crunch feedback presaged the band's subsequent sonic journey.

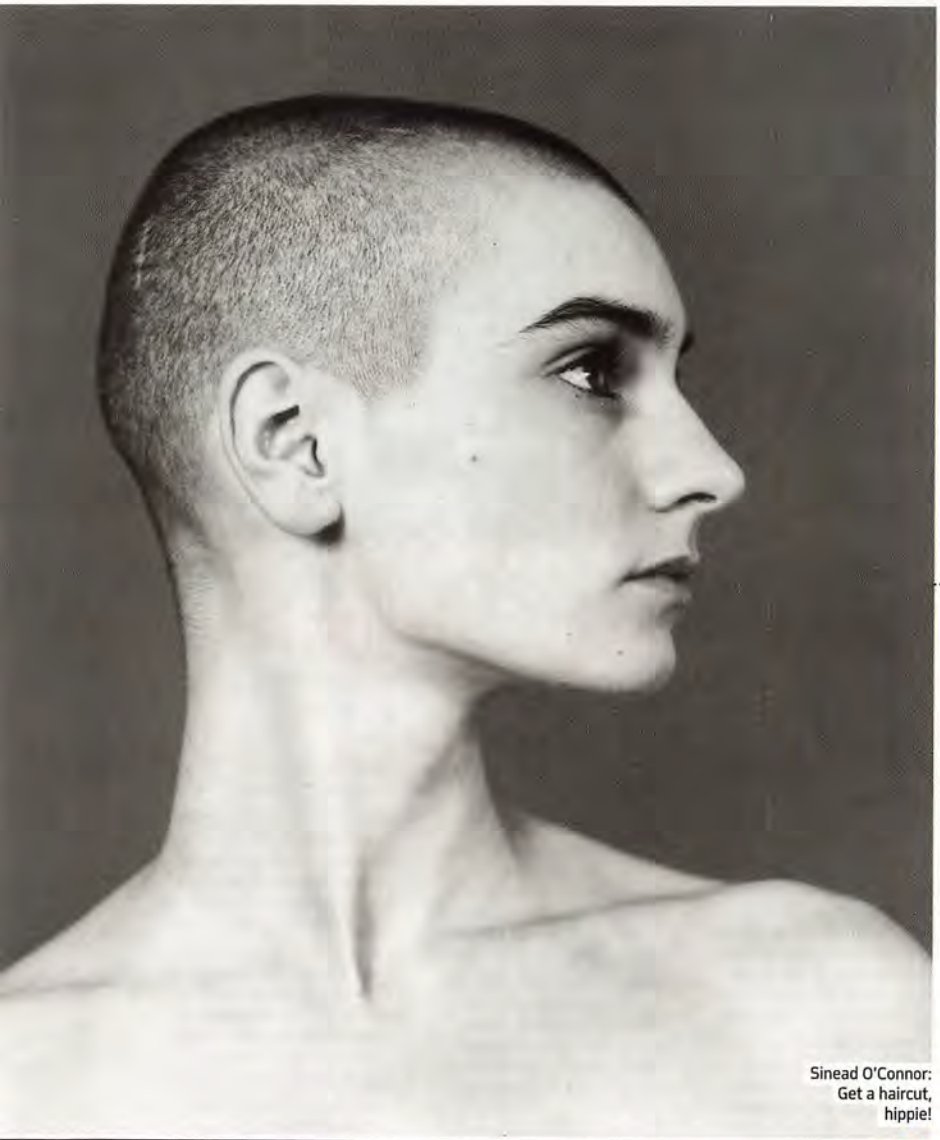
Available on: *Pablo Honey* (Capitol)

110
TOXIC
BRITNEY SPEARS
[2003]

Pop princess turns kryptonite into radio activity

→ Grown and sexy Britney ditched the "Slave" python to record this dance hit that makes toxic waste out of a poisonous ex. Written with Cathy Dennis, who penned Kylie's "Can't Get You Out of My Head," it smacks down an errant lover who sounds suspiciously like her trash-talking former beau Justin Timberlake. *In the Zone* was Britney's album about fame, and "Toxic"'s coked-up beats and electronic jitters mimic the throb of life in the paparazzi glare.

Available on: *In the Zone* (Jive)



Sinead O'Connor: Get a haircut, hippie!

111
PLANET ROCK
AFRIKA BAMBAATAA & THE SOUL SONIC FORCE
[1982]

Kraftwerk (unintentionally) write the last great electro-rap song

→ "I don't think Kraftwerk knew how big they were among the black masses," Afrika Bambaataa has said. On "Planet Rock," the uptown DJ turned the German knob-twiddlers' springy computer funk into one of hip-hop's early masterpieces, all hoarse raps and shouts over b-boy-friendly electro loops, presaging the genre's dance-floor future in the process.

Available on: *Looking for the Perfect Beat, 1980–1985* (Tommy Boy)

112
ROUND AND ROUND
RATT
[1984]

Brought to you by Aqua Net and Uncle Miltie in a dress

→ Frontline soldiers of the Sunset Strip hair-metal battalion, Ratt burned through fame—and their makeup supply—hot and fast. Their first hit was also their biggest—because really, after Milton Berle has donned drag in your video, where else can you go? "Round and Round" would eventually get covered by indie bard Lou Barlow, who used it to poke a hole of levity into otherwise dense sets. "People burst out laughing," he says, "once the chorus kicks in."

Available on: *Out of the Cellar* (Atlantic)

113
NOTHING COMPARES 2 U
SINEAD O'CONNOR
[1990]

She was bald, depressed and, for at least a couple of years, brilliant

→ Frank Sinatra wanted to kick her ass. The Pope prolly did too. But even they couldn't take Sinead O'Connor's one shining moment away from her. Written and arranged by Prince, this indelible romantic dirge catapulted O'Connor from obscurity to ubiquity. And the video—a four-minute close-up of O'Connor's close-shaved pate—made her anguish inescapable.

Available on: *I Do Not Want What I Haven't Got* (Ensign/Chrysalis)

114
CRAZY IN LOVE
BEYONCÉ
[2003]

Destiny's Child loses its star, Jay-Z gains a girlfriend

→ Cutting herself loose from the girl-group noose, Beyoncé celebrated ostentatiously on her first solo hit, which sounds like a royal procession stomping through a '70s nightclub. The horns blare and pop, and B's syncopated sighs percuss atop. A child of Destiny no more, Beyoncé also made this a move from one support system to another: Capped by Jay-Z's preening verse, "Crazy" became their unofficial coming-out party as a couple.

Available on: *Dangerously in Love* (Columbia)

115
GIN & JUICE
SNOOP DOGG
[1993]

Current star of T-Mobile commercials once made great weed songs

→ After Dr. Dre patented his G-Funk sound on *The Chronic*, he passed it to Snoop, who was then just a babyfaced Crip with a lethargic flow. Snoop would become the first post-N.W.A rap star from L.A. thanks to this hesher anthem delivered with gangster assuredness. With its house-party video, he made the 'hood palatable to the 'burbs, an easygoing teddy bear speaking the universal language of "high."

Available on: *Doggystyle* (Death Row)

116
VIOLET
HOLE
[1994]

Courtney Love feels pain, causes pain, sings through pain

→ Kurt and Courtney were the king and queen of catharsis. "A lot of the reason people like our bands is because of the anger involved," Love once said. But by the time this unhinged rager was released, Cobain had no more pain left—he'd been found dead the week before. Whether or not the late grunge hero had helped bang Hole's songs into shape, Love's howl shot this one into orbit. "Go on, take everything!" she rasps, the sound of a life—or two—unraveling.

Available on: *Live Through This* (Geffen)

117
PAID IN FULL
ERIC B. & RAKIM
[1987]

Five Percenter writes a gripping stick-up thriller

→So thoroughly blasé about its cold-blooded threats, this is quite possibly the most menacing rap song of all time. Providing a link between Slick Rick and Biggie, Rakim spins a tale in which empty pockets lead to a stick-up that might go awry. It's all the more chilling since Rakim insists it all happened. "That was something that was true," he said of the song's verse. "It just came out. [It took] half an hour."

Available on: *Paid in Full: Deluxe Edition* (4th & Broadway)

118
CARS WITH THE BOOM
L'TRIMM
[1988]

Teenage naifs pretend to get sweaty for muscular woofers

→ "We were virgins!" swears Tigra, one half of L'Trimm, about the time she and pal Bunny D impishly proclaimed undying love for boys with big, throbbing ... speakers. The Miami teens used to skip school to write raps, and caught on with this lightheartedcurio, topping elements of Miami's raunchy bass music with the high-pitched chirps of a couple of girls who hadn't yet learned to flirt for real.

Available on: *Grab It!* (Hot/Atlantic)

119
HOW I COULD JUST KILL A MAN
CYPRESS HILL
[1991]

It's hard to aim a sawed-off stoned, but these legalization activists were game to try

→ Before they became one-note cannabis crusaders, Cypress Hill were unlikely heirs to Los Angeles's gangsta rap throne. Their debut single sounded positively paranoiac, thanks to wobbly horn samples and B-Real's nasal raps. The inspiration? "Getting high and doing beats," DJ Muggs has said. But through the purple haze, the group still managed some incredibly thuggish rhymes.

Available on: *Cypress Hill* (Ruffhouse/Columbia)

LAURA LEVINE

120
GET LOW
LIL JON & THE EAST SIDE BOYZ
[2002]

Back to the essence, meaning sweat, shouts and sex

→ Lil Jon earned his *Chappelle's Show* parody with this crunk workout, which sounds like 100 strip-club DJs spinning at once. Chants, howls, whistles—why rap when so many other options are available? "We were trying to be true to the people at the clubs," said Jon. The Ying Yang Twins drop guest verses, but the real magic might have come from Jon's Crunk!!! energy drink.

Available on: *Kings of Crunk* (TVT)

121
IN THE END
LINKIN PARK
[2002]

SoCal collective master angsta-rap

→ Initially, Linkin Park sounded as if they'd arrived at the rap-metal party too late, but they wound up enjoying the longest lifespan of the lot, largely because they never learned to be proper mooks. Mike Shinoda raps, charmingly enough, like a kid tugging on Mos Def's leg. His band is as adept at gale-force pomp as minor-key piano, building up drama before Chester Bennington does his best Bauhaus imitation.

Available on: *Hybrid Theory* (Warner Bros.)

122
ALL I WANNA DO
SHERYL CROW
[1993]

World-weariness in a candy-coated hook

→ Long before dating seven-time Tour de France champ Lance Armstrong, Sheryl Crow was a clean-scrubbed, grinning beach girl. Sort of. Though the elegantly catchy chorus here underscores the song's sunny disposition, at heart this is a skeptic's anthem, suggesting emotional rumblings beneath the glowing surface. "Most of my lyrics are kind of cynical," shrugged Crow.

Available on: *Tuesday Night Music Club* (A&M)

Even A Flock of Seagulls largely shunned the Flock of Seagulls haircut.

123
FORMED A BAND
ART BRUT
[2004]

Snide Brit punks whip up some heavy meta

→ South Londoners with a penchant for the wry, Art Brut can't decide what they like less—pop stars or smug underground kingpins. This debut single takes a piss on both camps. It's short enough for the Ramones and packed with enough self-awareness to do LCD Soundsystem's James Murphy proud. Said frontman Eddie Argos, "We want to make people think, 'Yeah, I could form a band.'" And really, you can. Honest.

Available on: *Bang Bang Rock & Roll* (Fierce Panda import)

124
SAD SONGS (SAY SO MUCH)
ELTON JOHN
[1984]

Believe what Elton says, not how he says it

→ If the title of this upbeat piano ditty is to be believed, what are we to make of how happy John sounds while singing it? "If someone else is suffering enough to write it down," he sings, "it's easier to have those songs around." Released the same year he entered a sham marriage—he knew he was gay years before, he's said—it sounds like a man trying on a brave face to see how it fits.

Available on: *Greatest Hits, 1970–2002* (MCA)

125
ROCKIT
HERBIE HANCOCK
[1983]

Because there's just not enough pop-locking in the jazz world

→ "I'd just heard scratching for the first time about a week before we recorded 'Rockit,'" Herbie Hancock has said of this turntable-drunk jam. The rush didn't hurt. With production from Bill Laswell, "Rockit" became a breakdancing anthem in no time. And with its bizarro video, featuring mechanical models hooked up to wires and cavorting in time to the beat, it made Hancock the first—and perhaps only—jazzman to get regular play on MTV.

Available on: *Future Shock* (Columbia)

126
IT WAS A GOOD DAY
ICE CUBE
[1992]

A day of calm in a lifetime of thuggery

→ When he was writing songs for N.W.A, Ice "Are We There Yet?" Cube could deliver a narrative that turned from calm to grim in a matter of a few lines. It's that persistent tension that defines this "Good Day," with a twist: the tragedy never comes. "Today I didn't even have to use my AK," drawls Ice. It was "something different, that people didn't expect," he has said of his highest-charting pop single.

Available on: *The Predator* (Priority)

127
BULLS ON PARADE
RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE
[1996]

Pinko noiseniks delight/confuse the mosh pit

→ When Chuck D imagined what hip-hop would sound like a decade after Public Enemy debuted, he probably envisioned Rage Against the Machine: agit-rap for unwitting mooks. While Zach de la Rocha snarls about "power dons," the band ducks melody to underscore his point. When Rage performed the song on *Saturday Night Live*, they were booted from the show so host Steve Forbes could pitch the flat tax unmolested.

Available on: *Evil Empire* (Epic)

128
MILKSHAKE
KELIS
[2003]

Her milkshake brought all the boys to the yard, and Nas too

→ The best catchphrases are ciphers, applicable in many situations. So even though Kelis never explains what a milkshake is—"Some songs are meant to be read into," she said—it's clear that yours doesn't pass muster and hers does. This was the last dance for Kelis and her ex, Pharrell, who blessed her with this sinuous beat and then, in the video, handed her off to future husband Nas, who was behind a counter serving up a better shake.

Available on: *Tasty* (Star Trak/Arista)

129
I RAN (SO FAR AWAY)
A FLOCK OF SEAGULLS
[1982]

Leftover hair gel fuels 20-year career of one song

→ Ex-hairdressers with new wave in their heart, A Flock of Seagulls wrote one perfect hook in their career. "I Ran" was an MTV staple, and two decades later the de facto theme song for the videogame *Grand Theft Auto: Vice City*. The Flock would bury the song on the comeback reality show *Hit Me Baby One More Time*, losing out to the better-coiffed Arrested Development.

Available on: *A Flock of Seagulls* (Jive)

130
MAMA SAID KNOCK YOU OUT
LL COOL J
[1990]

The lesson: Do not piss off a rapper's grandmother

→ His grandma told LL to knock out the competition—but asked him to keep his lyrics clean. This song was the result of those seemingly opposite requests, a barebones bruiser that helped save LL from a wimpy, lady-lover reputation. Even better was a vivid, sweaty rendition on *MTV Unplugged* as memorable for LL's fierceness as for the clumps of deodorant trapped in his armpits.

Available on: *Mama Said Knock You Out* (Def Jam)

MY TOP FIVE

BRITT DANIEL
SPOON
[b. 1/12/72]

MY EVER CHANGING MOODS
THE STYLE COUNCIL

ROOTS TRAIN
JUNIOR MURVIN

BROKEN MAN
CROOKED FINGERS

LET'S PRETEND WE'RE MARRIED
PRINCE

NIGHT OF THE LIVING BASEHEADS
PUBLIC ENEMY

SEAGULLS: FIN COSTELLO/REDFERNS/RETNA LTD.; DANIEL: AUTUMN DE WILDE

George Michael: Years later, he stunned the world by announcing his homosexuality.

131
FREEDOM
GEORGE MICHAEL
[1990]

A not-quite-coming-out anthem

→ "There's something deep inside of me/There's someone else I've got to be": George Michael laid it all on the line with this exuberant, blue-eyed soul number, but couldn't quite bring himself to reveal all his secrets. In the video, a gaggle of stripping supermodels subbed in for George, lip-syncing the lyrics—he wouldn't officially come out until eight years later. "I was protecting my privacy," he said. "I was always proud of who I was."

Available on: *Listen Without Prejudice, Vol. I* (Columbia)

132
WALTZ #2 (XO)
ELLIOTT SMITH
[1998]

Indie-rock softie hits the limelight, but smarts behind the glare

→ One year after his awkwardly fascinating Oscars performance, Smith returned with a major-label debut and this charmer, a shuffling Beatlesque jaunt that, despite some heartbreak, positively beamed compared with his earlier, dustier work. But disappointment, in whatever guise, was never too far away. "'Waltz #2,' 'XO,' whatever that song was called, I played it so much," he lamented, "I couldn't hear it anymore."

Available on: *XO* (Dreamworks)

133
THROUGH THE WIRE
KANYE WEST
[2004]

How a seatbelt, an airbag and a lot of luck made for a hip-hop classic

→ Partly recorded when his jaw was wired shut after a near-fatal car accident, "Through the Wire" proves that nothing short of death can stop the display of Kanye's ego. The Chaka Khan sample is triumphant, the rhymes braggadocious and comedic. The crash kicked West's career—and devotion to Christ—into high gear: "I feel like I've been ordained to come up with good music," he's said.

Available on: *The College Dropout* (Roc-A-Fella)

134
BELIEVE
CHER
[1998]

Do you believe in life after Rob Camilletti?

→ Twenty-five years had passed since she'd last had a No. 1 hit, and Cher didn't think a heavily-vocoded disco anthem was the key to her comeback strategy. "We argued the whole way through," she said of the recording process. But "Believe" was a monster, sculpted in the studio to dance-floor perfection and retaining Cher's signature woman-of-a-certain-age assuredness. It was an empowerment anthem only technology could have produced.

Available on: *Believe* (Warner Bros.)

135
DAUGHTER
PEARL JAM
[1993]

Eddie Vedder, a man for all dystopias

→ Pearl Jam is for the children. Really. After arguing on the behalf of Jeremy on *Ten*, Eddie Vedder took up the cause of another disaffected youngster on "Daughter." Or did he? He's been coy about the gentle song's meaning; some posit it's about a girl who's sexually abused by her father. Whatever the case, this is invigorating blues, delivered with Vedder's massive sense of purpose intact.

Available on: *Vs.* (Epic)

136
WORD UP!
CAMEO
[1986]

The codpiece that launched a thousand "Ooowwwww!"s

→ "If you were to look 'different' up in the dictionary, you'd see Cameo's picture," said frontman Larry Blackmon, he of the infamously plump red codpiece. A funk band with hip-hop attitude and aggressive sexuality, Cameo were sampled by everyone from DJ Quik to Mariah Carey. But they mostly leave this signature vamp alone, because it grooves, it shimmies, it seduces, it pummels, and to take just one part of it would only highlight the rest that was missing.

Available on: *Word Up!* (Mercury)

MY TOP FIVE ↓

JUSTIN HAWKINS
THE DARKNESS
[b. 3/17/75]

STRAWBERRY FIELDS FOREVER
CANDY FLIP

SHADDAP YOU FACE
JOE DOLCE

LIVE IS LIFE
OPUS

CLOUDS ACROSS THE MOON
RAH BAND

THORN IN MY SIDE
EURYTHMICS

137
BRIMFUL OF ASHA
CORNERSHOP
[1997]

A cultural mashup unifies hipsters of all races

→ Asha Bhosle has sung in thousands of Bollywood films, but there's only one pop tune named in her honor. Cornershop's wistful tribute is a polyglot-pop love note to frontman Tjinder Singh's twin heritages—an Indian Brit singing a Beatlesque ode to a famed singer from the motherland. The next year, a Fatboy Slim remix gave "Asha" life on the dance floor. "Asian music is considered passive," Singh said. "That's bollocks."

Available on: *When I Was Born for the 7th Time* (Luaka Bop)

138
UP THE BRACKET
THE LIBERTINES
[2002]

What is the sound of a band imploding?

→ Before singer Pete Doherty's meltdown into crack-smoking and burglary, this track helped secure the Libertines legend. Carried by swagger, charm and a few key chords, "Bracket" was pop music made by cool kids, garage-punk for the masses. Today, Doherty acts as a muse to Dior designer Hedi Slimane, fronts the band Babyshambles and dates Kate Moss. As public unravelings go, it sure is glam.

Available on: *Up the Bracket* (Rough Trade/Sanctuary)

139
THE BREAKS
KURTIS BLOW
[1980]

Hip-hop goes pop, 15 years before Puffy figured it out

→ In what was a remarkably prescient deal, Blow was the first rapper signed to a major label, a deal brokered by his then-manager, Russell Simmons. The quick result was this, rap's first gold record. "The Breaks" was an "Ironic" for the early hip-hop era. It had "philosophical lyric content," as Blow described it—a series of ain't-life-a-bitch quips that were as light and poppy as the track's effervescent disco production.

Available on: *Kurtis Blow Presents the History of Rap, Vol. 2* (Rhino)

140
SHOOK ONES PT. 2
MOBB DEEP
[1995]

While hip-hop blinged, two Queens MCs stayed "gutter"

→ Nowhere in pop has a piano ever been deployed to such devastating effect. The beat is skeletal—a simple snare pattern and a two-bar minor-key piano loop—and the rhymes are powerfully bleak: "I'm only 19, but my mind is old." Said Prodigy, "Our music is that gutter shit. It ain't never changing." The "official Queensbridge murderers" helped preserve New York hip-hop's dark underbelly while their peers developed a taste for Moët.

Available on: *The Infamous ...* (Loud)

MICHAEL: ROB VERHORST/REDFERNS/RETNA LTD.; HAWKINS: RICHARD YOUNG/REX USA

141
MAPS
YEAH YEAH YEAHS
[2003]

Weirdos write torch song, try to fit in

→ Ten songs on the YYY's major-label debut are scrambled art-punk blasts, rammed together to paint a portrait of downtown New York as still scuzzy. The eleventh one, "Maps"—a slow-moving meditation on decaying love—was the hit. It's a "bleeding heart song," singer Karen O has said. "There was a lot of emotional unrest going on. The water was really murky." It proved Karen O could be a siren *and* a vixen.

Available on: *Fever to Tell* (Interscope)

142
EVERYBODY WANTS YOU
BILLY SQUIER
[1982]

Oft-sampled rocker disses the fabulous life

→ Other Squier songs have become sample fodder for rappers from Dizzee Rascal to Jay-Z, but here, Squier's sneer trumps his boom-bap. The wages of fame is a tired trope, but Squier nails the condescension perfectly. Speaking of the poison of celebrity: A mash-up of this song with Fischerspooner's "Emerge" landed a spot on the *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy* soundtrack.

Available on: *Emotions in Motion* (Capitol)

Alanis Morissette reveals the *real* reason she dated Uncle Joey.

143
LIT UP
BUCKCHERRY
[1999]

Much-inked L.A. longhairs turn "I love the cocaine" into addictive chorus

→ Just as Guns N' Roses were fading out in a drug haze, Buckcherry—a band that came together because the singer and guitarist had the same tattooist—offered this last great blast of Sunset Strip debauchery. The best drug songs create an illusion that the band was high in the studio, but as the overamped Josh Todd howls "I'm at II" over an AC/DC riff, you wonder if it's an illusion at all.

Available on: *Buckcherry* (DreamWorks)

144
THE BODY ROCK
THE TREACHEROUS THREE
[1980]

Kool Moe Dee's stepping stone to (self-proclaimed) greatness

→ One of the top early rap crews, the Treacherous Three became known for launching the career of Kool Moe Dee. "Body Rock," which rode a chant-along hook and a sinuous funk-rock lick, KMD "literally mouthed out (wrote) the music," he said. No disrespect to his T3 mates L.A. Sunshine and Special K, but in his 2003 book, KMD ranked himself the fifth-best rapper of all time. Ah, modesty.

Available on: *Various Artists: The Best of Enjoy! Records* (Hot Productions)

145
BEAUTIFUL
CHRISTINA AGUILERA
[2002]

Xtina gives the world a hug

→ From the outset of her career, Christina Aguilera always laid plenty of things bare, but all that nakedness obscured just how good her voice was. "Beautiful" was her rejoinder to years of critical scorn, with near-operatic vocals and no production flourishes to hide them. The song, written by fellow scorn-object Linda "4 Non Blondes" Perry, earned her the grudging admiration of a sea of haters and, eventually, a Grammy.

Available on: *Stripped* (RCA)

146
GOODIES
CIARA
[2004]

How an Atlanta good girl became an anti-sex sex symbol

→ With "Goodies," crunk macher Lil Jon expanded his rowdy empire into R&B, turning unknown 19-year-old Ciara into the Aaliyah of her generation. Scrapping crunk's typical hedonism, "Goodies" preached the virtues of holding out; Ciara teased and needled while Jon's beat suggested an urgent throbbing in need of relief. "At first I wasn't crazy about crunk," Ciara admitted, but like the rest of the world, she eventually relented. "You can't deny it."

Available on: *Goodies* (LaFace/Arista)

147
EVERYBODY KNOWS
LEONARD COHEN
[1988]

Pessimist tries to put the light at the end of a dark tunnel

→ "I think that a good song exists in modest terms and in Himalayan terms," this singer-poet once said. This song, a hard-jazz-experiment-meets-trembling-disco-inferno written at the height of the AIDS epidemic, succeeds on both counts. Cohen's lyrics seethe with resentment and disappointment, but the backdrop—a relentless, pulsing heartbeat of strings—exposes what might be the Canadian contrarian's secret weapon: optimism.

Available on: *I'm Your Man* (Columbia)

148
MY LOVIN' (YOU'RE NEVER GONNA GET IT)
EN VOGUE
[1992]

When they said no, it just made you want them more

→ Before En Vogue, girl-group harmonies hadn't been heard in such force on the pop charts for three decades. With Dawn Robinson singing lead, this girl-power anthem would have done Lilith Fair proud—the repeated chant "You're never gonna get it" was a kiss-off par excellence, unprocessed feistiness and sass, just before hip-hop took out a monopoly on swagger.

Available on: *Funky Divas* (EastWest)

149
YOU OUGHTA KNOW
ALANIS MORISSETTE
[1995]

The sound of an ex's soul being banished to hell for eternity

→ Famous in Canada as a kids-TV starlet, 20-year-old Alanis decamped to L.A. and thrashed her way out of a career of cheese with this blast of post-adolescent bitterness. It also might be the best song ever written about a *Full House* cast member: Alanis dated Dave "Uncle Joey" Coulier, though she has steadfastly refused to identify the song's target.

Available on: *Jagged Little Pill* (Maverick)

PEGGY SIROTA/CORBIS OUTLINE

The women of Human League.

150
DON'T YOU WANT ME
HUMAN LEAGUE
[1981]

The wages of love, without an ounce of sweat

→ More than any other song of the '80s, this one captured all the frailties of romantic relationships. Guy discovers girl. Guy makes girl over. Guy loves girl. Girl rejects guy. Guy writes icy, resentful song about it. Romance can be chilly, something Human League—with their arty pretentiousness, geometric haircuts and well-honed skepticism—knew all too well.

Available on: *Dare!* (A&M)

151
RUN
GHOSTFACE FEAT. JADAKISS
[2004]

The sound of cops giving chase to your crack-dealing ass

→ This song kicks in with superhero horns, but the stars here are the guys who scamper off before the cops arrive. Ghost raps like one still panting from the chase, while Jadakiss stays cool: "My Timbs start feeling like they Nike Airs on me." "You got brothers who get away when they run," Ghostface explained. "It's a grimy song."

Available on: *The Pretty Toney Album* (Def Jam)

152
I FEEL FOR YOU
CHAKA KHAN
[1984]

Four huge stars make one funk classic

→ In 1984, Chaka Khan set out to do the impossible: Turn a song into a hit when its author, the mighty Prince, could not. With producer Arif Mardin, the gentle jam became a multi-layered attack—va-va-voom vocals from Chaka, sharp drum machine rhythms, a pneumatic rap from Melle Mel and harmonica runs from Stevie Wonder. The sonic overkill worked—this remains Chaka's biggest hit.

Available on: *I Feel for You* (Warner Bros.)

MY TOP FIVE

CHRIS COLLINGWOOD
FOUNTAINS OF WAYNE
[b. 10/3/67]

DELIA'S GONE
JOHNNY CASH

PONCHO AND LEFTY
TOWNES VAN ZANDT

(DON'T FEAR) THE REAPER
BLUE ÖYSTER CULT

VANITY FAIR
SQUEEZE

LAST CHANCE TEXACO
RICKIE LEE JONES

153
ORDINARY WORLD
DURAN DURAN
[1993]

A love song by and for aging hipsters

→ Don't let the frosted hair fool you: Duran Duran were innovators. As John Taylor put it, "We had the idea of playing European funk with punk attitude, but slicker." Which made their 1993 comeback even more of a shock. Simon LeBon traded his seductive yelps for a more meditative sound, and the result was tempered and catchy, not to mention rare—a band aging more gracefully than its fans.

Available on: *The Wedding Album* (Capitol)

154
STAY
LISA LOEB
[1994]

The coffeehouse revolution that lasted exactly one song

→ *Reality Bites* gave us Ethan Hawke, post-grunge brooding and bespectacled singer-songwriter Lisa Loeb. With her soundtrack hit "Stay," Loeb became the first unsigned artist with a No. 1 single in *Billboard* history. But coffeehouse chic was short-lived—"People only think of you as the couple of songs you have on the radio," she said.

Available on: *Reality Bites* Soundtrack (RCA)

155
NOT DARK YET
BOB DYLAN
[1997]

The passion of the Zimmerman

→ This delicate ramble from the best Dylan album of the '90s is affecting and stark. With gentle, ambient production by Daniel Lanois, Dylan has nowhere to hide his pain, raw enough to affect even Mel Gibson, who included it on a *Passion of the Christ* companion album. "A lot of my songs are written after the sun goes down," said Dylan. "And I like storms."

Available on: *Time out of Mind* (Columbia)

156
DOUBLE DUTCH BUS
FRANKIE SMITH
[1981]

Rejected by the bus company, Philly songwriter invents hip-hop newspeak

→ When payola investigations shut the doors of Gamble & Huff's Philadelphia International Records, staff writer Frankie Smith was without a gig. He applied to be a bus driver and was rejected, but Smith dashed off this ode to rope-jumping and public transportation, considered the first appearance of the "izzle"-speak Snoop Dogg would popularize years later.

Available on: *Various Artists: Old School Vol. I* (Thump)

157
AROUND THE WORLD
DAFT PUNK
[1997]

Disco, Casios and Frenchmen: three unlikely comebacks in one

→ This robo-disco mantra was the song that made LCD Soundsystem's James Murphy fantasize about Daft Punk playing at his house. "I liked how wimpy 'Around the World' was," he explains. "I couldn't resist it." Boosted by director Michel Gondry's freaky-dancing video clip, it made Paris hip again and left house music hooked on retro.

Available on: *Homework* (Virgin)

158
HARD KNOCK LIFE (GHETTO ANTHEM)
JAY-Z
[1998]

Annie takes a wrong turn on the way to the orphanage

→ Jigga got "no grief" for pilfering the hook here from the musical *Annie*. "They just call me genius." And while the credit for lifting the squealing tykes goes to producer Mark 45 King, it's Jay who pulls off the conceit without sounding conceited. Linking hardscrabble 'hood kids to squeaky-clean orphans was savvy, but while the kids bemoan their rough-and-tumble plight, Jay doesn't get bogged down.

Available on: *Vol. 2... Hard Knock Life* (Roc-A-Fella)

159
BIRTH, SCHOOL, WORK, DEATH
THE GODFATHERS
[1988]

Agit-rocking against Thatcher

→ Before Tony Blair, England had the Godfathers, who did their part to sing down the Tories. Said guitarist Mike Gibson, "There's a mood of depression in this song," which was written just as Margaret Thatcher was being reelected. "We were feeling pretty low." Indeed, in between wiseass grumbling—"I've felt torture, I've felt pain/Just like that film with Michael Caine"—the band chants the title sternly, as if it were a prison chain-gang refrain.

Available on: *Birth, School, Work, Death* (Epic)

160
TEMPTATION
NEW ORDER
[1981]

Dancing through the pain in the wake of Joy Division

→ After Ian Curtis's suicide, the rest of his band came to New York, "boozing and getting out of it" in nightclubs. Reformed as New Order, they wanted to make the soundtrack to those nights. For them, catharsis came on the dance floor. "Temptation" could have been a three-minute pop blast—"Up, down, turn around/Please don't let me hit the ground"—but they stretched it to seven, dragging it out as if to help them forget.

Available on: *Substance* (Qwest)

HUMAN LEAGUE: SIMON FOWLER/LFI; COLLINGWOOD: AMY GRAVES/WIREIMAGE.COM

161
DANGER! HIGH VOLTAGE
ELECTRIC SIX
[2003]

Jack White's Detroit buddies raise gonzo-disco hell

→ From the Studio 54 guitar lick in the opening bars to the squealing saxophone in the fadeout, this is an irresistible example of stuffed-crust, extra-topping cheese. It evokes the precise moment when a party gets out of hand, with frontman Dick Valentine and an uncredited Jack White as your crazy-eyed hosts. And what's not to love about a song that rhymes "Taco Bell" with "gates of hell"?

Available on: *Fire* (Beggars/XL)

162
JUMP
VAN HALEN
[1984]

The sound of Reagan-era excess

→ David Lee Roth likes to say he was watching a would-be suicide on the news when he heard bystanders chant "Jump!" But then he also used to claim that Van Halen's first No. 1 single was inspired by a stripper. Whatever the inspiration, "Jump" is all about Eddie Van Halen's monstrous synthesizer riff. Initially resisted by Roth, who feared cries of "sellout," it's as evocative of the '80s as *Top Gun*.

Available on: *1984* (Warner Bros.)

David Lee Roth dedicates the next song to his wig guy.

163
SISTER CHRISTIAN
NIGHT RANGER
[1983]

Sibling-inspired power-ballad overload

→ Christy Keagy is now an office manager in Oregon, but 22 years ago she was the heroine of "Sister Christian," the most bombastic power ballad of all. "I was writing about her looking for love," said her brother, drummer-singer Kelly Keagy. "Everybody thought I said 'Christian.'" In the movie *Boogie Nights*, Alfred Molina's coke-crazed drug dealer was brought to his knees by its chorus.

Available on: *Boogie Nights* Soundtrack (Capitol)

164
THE LOOK OF LOVE
ABC
[1982]

Smart-aleck collision of disco, synth-pop and English wit

→ When Martin Fry, a white Brit who dreamed of being Smokey Robinson, hijacked electronic band Vice Versa and set about turning them into his fantasy pop group, their first hit was also their finest. Founded on Fry's camp lyrics and Trevor Horn's wedding-cake production, this is a treasure trove of witty touches, from Fry's arch internal dialogue to the female voice popping out of leftfield to drawl "goodbye."

Available on: *The Lexicon of Love* (Mercury)

165
BYE BYE BYE
'N SYNC
[2000]

Timberlake and dorks' pop apocalypse

→ Max Martin was the bearded emperor of millennial teen-pop. At one point, you couldn't turn on *TRL* without hearing his stabbing strings and singing-down-a-bad-cellphone-line vocal effects. He only had one trick, already performed on Britney and the Backstreet Boys, but it was a great one: He magnified puppy love emotions to operatic proportions. "Bye Bye Bye" is peerless pop melodrama, a romantic kiss-off that sounds like a declaration of war.

Available on: *No Strings Attached* (Jive)

166
START ME UP
ROLLING STONES
[1981]

The greatest rock & roll band in the world discover the joys of recycling

→ The Rolling Stones' last bona fide classic almost rusted away in the vaults. Written to a reggae beat and then abandoned in 1977, it was rediscovered by chance four years later and reborn as a vintage riff-rocker. "The story here is the miracle that we ever found that track," says Keith Richards. "It was like a gift, y'know?" It was one that kept on giving, too—Microsoft paid $8 million to use the song to hawk Windows 95.

Available on: *Tattoo You* (Virgin)

167
BREATHE
FAITH HILL
[1999]

Swooning ballad turns country gal into Mississippi queen

→ This is what Aerosmith would sound like if they had steel guitar and Steve Tyler looked even more like a chick. "Breathe" launched Hill into a power-ballad catfight with fellow crossover sexpot Shania Twain. This tops Hill's other divine smashes, "Cry" and "One," because, just when the lyrics describe love as "a slow and steady rush," she builds the chorus into, well, a slow and steady rush. Keep selling out, country girl.

Available on: *Breathe* (Warner Bros.)

168
JUICY
NOTORIOUS B.I.G.
[1994]

Biggie records his version of *The Wonder Years*

→ You can thank P. Diddy for Biggie Smalls's signature tune. During sessions for the rapper's debut album, Biggie wanted underground cred but Puffy demanded radio smashes. He laid down a chunk of Mtume's 1983 R&B hit "Juicy Fruit" and Biggie reflected charismatically on a childhood of hip-hop tapes, pissed off teachers and sardines for dinner. He later admitted: "I wasn't even with 'Juicy,' but he's saying, 'Let's go get the money,' so I'm like, fuck it." Good move.

Available on: *Ready to Die* (Bad Boy)

169
WHEN DOVES CRY
PRINCE
[1984]

Freudian psychodrama you can dance to

→ The biggest record of 1984 was a very odd piece of work: a funk record with no bassline, a tense hunk of neo-psychedelia (the synthesizers are meant to represent crying doves), a club hit wracked with angst about inheriting your folks' worst traits. Even though it was written for a specific moment in the *Purple Rain* movie, its appeal was universal, becoming the only song ever to be covered by Patti Smith and Ginuwine. But can doves really cry? Er, no.

Available on: *Purple Rain* (Warner Bros.)

LYNN GOLDSMITH

Avril Lavigne rebels against establishment, homeroom.

170
GIRLS & BOYS
BLUR
[1994]

Britpop cuties throw a gender-bending disco party

→ Whoever said a Britpop band couldn't make a super-camp disco anthem hadn't heard Blur do their best Duran Duran impression here, with Damon Albarn sounding saucier than he ever has since: "Looking for girls who are boys/who like boys to be girls" and so on. British rockheads treated this as a stumbling block, but a decade later, Blur got their due with the polysexual confusion of the Killers' "Somebody Told Me."

Available on: *Parklife* (Virgin)

171
MS. JACKSON
OUTKAST
[2000]

Rap's dynamic duo holler at the baby mamas' mamas

→ Hip-hop means never having to say you're sorry, especially to women, which is why Outkast's repentant missive broke the mold. Andre 3000 begs forgiveness from the mother of ex-girlfriend (and mother of son Seven Sirius) Erykah Badu, while Big Boi speaks for every weekend dad who just wants to do the right thing. Homaged by Kanye West and reworked by the Vines, it even made the perfect punch line during Nipplegate.

Available on: *Stankonia* (LaFace/Arista)

172
FLAVA IN YA EAR
CRAIG MACK
[1994]

Rap's George Jetson introduces himself

→ Puff Daddy saw this Long Island MC as Bad Boy's class clown. Mack had other ideas and left the label, but not before giving it its commercial breakthrough. Described in the intro as "that ol' robotic, George Jetson, crazy joint," this is a charming showcase for Mack's laidback tongue-twisters. The remix topped the *Billboard* rap singles chart for an unprecedented 14 weeks.

Available on: *Project: Funk Da World* (Bad Boy)

MY TOP FIVE

FABOLOUS
[b. 11/18/79]

BILLIE JEAN
MICHAEL JACKSON

ONE MORE CHANCE
THE NOTORIOUS B.I.G.

GREATEST LOVE OF ALL
WHITNEY HOUSTON

HAIL MARY
TUPAC

MARY JANE (ALL NIGHT LONG)
MARY J. BLIGE

173
READY OR NOT
FUGEES
[1996]

Enya, the Delfonics and tag-team rapping, together at last

→ Considering they were three of rap's smartest operators, you might have expected the Fugees to get permission before sampling "Boadicea" by New Age siren Enya, but that unlicensed, hummed 12-note melody led to a costly settlement. The chorus is borrowed, too, from soul crooners the Delfonics, but every rhyme has the cool menace and bulletproof self-assurance of a band claiming their place at the head of hip-hop's table.

Available on: *The Score* (Ruffhouse)

174
FUCK AND RUN
LIZ PHAIR
[1993]

The sexual revolution wakes up with a sore head

→ A song called "Fuck and Run" was never going to be a radio single, but its morning-after soul-searching shows Phair's peppery, poignant songwriting at its best. As she asks "Whatever happened to a boyfriend, the kind of guy who tries to win you over?," she lets slip the romantic lurking inside the good-time girl. For anyone who's ever greeted the dawn on rumpled sheets and wondered if the night before was worth it.

Available on: *Exile in Guyville* (Matador)

175
MADE YOU LOOK
NAS
[2002]

How Nasir got his groove back

→ Queensbridge's finest grew bloated and irrelevant in the late '90s, effortlessly outclassed by his new archrival, Jay-Z, so he scythed away the flab with the hip-hop equivalent of weight training. From its opening shotgun blast to its a cappella payoff, "Made You Look" is a faultless, back-to-basics showcase for Nas's skills: a relentless, clattering breakbeat paired with lean, hard battle rhymes: "This ain't rappin', this is street hop."

Available on: *God's Son* (Columbia)

176
MURDER (OR A HEART ATTACK)
OLD 97'S
[1999]

Dallas songwriter knows love can be a cause of sudden death

→ In a tender twang, Rhett Miller has sung lots of pretty broken-heart songs. His best sounds like Neil Young skipping rope, and comes on a 1999 album Miller named *Fight Songs* because the songs are about love. Story: Girl sneaks out a window, boy searches for her and leaves a door open in case girl wants to return. Boy realizes girl, on return, might kill him.

Available on: *Fight Songs* (Elektra)

177
CALIFORNIA
PHANTOM PLANET
[2001]

The unofficial anthem of Orange County

→ Here's a tip for unknown bands: Name a song after the entertainment capital of the world. It worked for Phantom Planet, whose lineup included actors Jason Schwartzman (*Rushmore*) and Alex Greenwald (*Donnie Darko*). First this soaring tune landed on the soundtrack to Jack Black's *Orange County*, then hit big as the theme to *The O.C.* Good thing they didn't call it "North Dakota."

Available on: *Music From* The O.C.: *Mix I* (Warner Bros.)

178
JAM ON IT
NEWCLEUS
[1984]

Divine nonsense from chipmunk-voiced electro outfit

→ Who says early rap was all nonsense? Newcleus's breakdance anthem tells the story of rapper Cozmo D ("from outer space," apparently) holding a block-party battle with Superman, and is all about the crushing electro beats, fizzing synthesizers and squeaky backing vocals that sound like Alvin & the Chipmunks' tough cousins. Cozmo D wins the battle, by the way. Disco Kryptonite, y'see.

Available on: *Jam on This!: The Best of Newcleus* (Rhino)

179
THE SOUND OF SETTLING
DEATH CAB FOR CUTIE
[2003]

Indie mainstays resign themselves to obscurity, get famous

→ Death Cab probably owe Seth Cohen a percentage. The *O.C.* character's endorsement set the stage for this hit, full of vocals so upbeat they make sentiments such as "Our youth is fleeting/ Old age is just around the bend" sound like great news. Reflects frontman Ben Gibbard: "Every once in a while a song gets written in five minutes and becomes a song everyone loves."

Available on: *Transatlanticism* (Barsuk)

180
TOP BILLIN'
AUDIO TWO
[1988]

One turntable and two microphones

→ Old-school hip-hop would have been much grayer without the one-hit wonders who disappeared almost before they'd finished proclaiming their genius. Brothers of the better-known MC Lyte, Audio Two made the most of their 15 minutes of fame. Nothing more than a beat and some bratty braggadocio, "Top Billin'" is hip-hop stripped down to its rawest, dumbest, most exciting elements.

Available on: *Various Artists: Yo! MTV Raps: A Journey Back in Rhyme* (Rhino)

LAVIGNE: GABRIELLE REVERE/CORBIS OUTLINE; FABOLOUS: JONATHAN MANNION

181
OUR LIPS ARE SEALED
THE GO-GO'S
[1981]

A tour-bus romance spawns power-pop perfection

→ When guitarist Jane Wiedlin struck up a love affair with Specials vocalist Terry Hall, the couple wrote a song about bitchy rumors. Hall's version (with Fun Boy Three) was dark and brooding, while Wiedlin's was the essence of summer. From the first breezy backbeat to Wiedlin and Belinda Carlisle's final effervescent harmonies, there's not a note out of place.

Available on: *Beauty and the Beat* (I.R.S.)

182
COMPLICATED
AVRIL LAVIGNE
[2002]

Necktie-wearing Canadian tells posers to wise up

→ A teenage Alanis Morissette was an idea waiting to happen, but next to Alanis's five-alarm traumas, "Complicated" is merely a brief cloud in an otherwise sunny sky. Whipped up with hit-making trio the Matrix, it's an addictive recipe: a spry melody, Lavigne's distinctly Canadian pronunciation ("Whatcha yellin' furr?") and a precocious lyric about how teenage boys should drop the pretence and not make things so, like, complicated.

Available on: *Let Go* (Arista)

Liz Phair, back when she was so indie, she didn't even buy shoes.

183
JANIE'S GOT A GUN
AEROSMITH
[1989]

What happens when rock stars read *Newsweek*

→ Coming hard on the heels of a single about doing the nasty in an elevator, the dark revenge fantasy "Janie's Got a Gun" was the biggest curveball of Aerosmith's career. Finding inspiration in child-abuse statistics and a *Newsweek* article about firearm fatalities, Steven Tyler wrote this story of a girl who caps her abusive father. Swinging between tense restraint and explosive rage, it's as dramatic as its subject matter.

Available on: *Pump* (Geffen)

184
CAR WHEELS ON A GRAVEL ROAD
LUCINDA WILLIAMS
[1998]

Five-minute pocket memoir of a southern childhood

→ As a kid, Williams lived a tumbleweed existence, rolling wherever her poet father could find teaching work. "Car Wheels on a Gravel Road" is a restless child's-eye travelogue, teeming with detail: country hits on the radio, a dusty suitcase on a front step and the murmur of adults in the front, calling all the shots. When Williams Sr. heard the song, he apologized.

Available on: *Car Wheels on a Gravel Road* (Mercury)

185
FADE INTO YOU
MAZZY STAR
[1993]

Enigmatic duo seduce the mainstream with their opiate lullaby

→ Hope Sandoval and David Roback's strung-out desert blues was never designed for commercial success, but this fluked a hit, just missing the Top 40. It's a gorgeous song of surrender, to love or drugs or death, and Sandoval floats through it like a Xanaxed wraith, sensual yet drained of desire. How it later ended up in Paul Verhoeven's sci-fi shoot-'em-up *Starship Troopers* is anybody's guess.

Available on: *So Tonight That I Might See* (Capitol)

186
YOU DON'T LOVE ME (NO NO NO)
DAWN PENN
[1982]

A lovelorn reggae smash three decades in the making

→ The oldest new act of 1994 was a middle-aged Jamaican singer called Dawn Penn. A reggae star in the 1960s, she retired from music in 1970 and spent the next two decades working desk jobs until producers Steely & Clevie polished her signature tune into a global comeback, wrapping heartbroken desperation in the sound of a lazy summer's afternoon.

Available on: *No No No* (Big Beat)

187
KILLIN' TIME
CLINT BLACK
[1989]

Country music and alcoholism: a great marriage!

→ Two years before he married *Knots Landing* and *Love Boat* actress Lisa Hartman, this Houston dreamboat topped charts with his second single, a country classic: twangy guitar and lyrics about medicating your heartache with enough liquor to stop your heart entirely. The opening line sums up an entire tradition of Nashville wit: "You were the first thing that I thought of/When I thought I drank you off my mind."

Available on: *Greatest Hits* (RCA)

188
ADVENTURES OF GRANDMASTER FLASH ON THE WHEELS OF STEEL
GRANDMASTER FLASH
[1981]

Who needs MCs?

→ "I didn't think anyone was gonna get it," says Joseph Saddler. Flash's seven-minute mix odyssey proved that hip-hop was a producer's medium. Flash recorded it live, so every time he made a mistake he started from the beginning. "Adventures" represents the birth of sampling.

Available on: *The Adventures of Grandmaster Flash, Melle Mel & the Furious Five: More of the Best* (Rhino)

189
CRUSH
JENNIFER PAIGE
[1998]

Atlanta diva gets teenage infatuation in perspective

→ Jennifer Paige started singing in Atlanta coffeehouses at the age of 8, so she was a seasoned vet by the time she hit the charts. Predating the Orlando pop boom by a year, "Crush" was an unusually supple and sophisticated teen-pop hit. A manifesto for short-term fun rather than lifelong commitment ("white picket fences in your eyes," she sniffs), swept along by a breathy chorus, pulsing groove and Paige's exquisite multilayered vocals.

Available on: *Jennifer Paige* (Hollywood)

FRANK W. OCKENFELS 3/CORBIS OUTLINE

The Beastie Boys: Craziest. Bar mitzvah. Ever.

190
SHAKE YOUR RUMP
BEASTIE BOYS
[1989]

A Brooklyn-L.A. alliance rewrites the hip-hop rulebook

→ Hip-hop's erstwhile fratbrats were desperate for fresh ideas when Mike D. met L.A. production duo the Dust Brothers. One of the first instrumentals they played him later became "Shake Your Rump." Richly unpredictable, it sounds like a dozen different songs at once, united by the Beasties' allusive lyrics. A commercial flop at the time, now a benchmark of kaleidoscopic B-boy ingenuity. And rump-shaking.

Available on: *Paul's Boutique* (Capitol)

191
BASTARDS OF YOUNG
REPLACEMENTS
[1985]

College-rock heroes give success the middle finger

→ Any college kid rebutting the Reagan-endorsed vision of '80s achievement had a custom-made anthem here. Paul Westerberg's rallying cry finds euphoria in defeat. It was set to trigger the band's mainstream breakthrough, but they kayboshed it by releasing an MTV-confounding video showing nothing but a stereo, and swearing drunkenly during on *SNL*.

Available on: *Tim* (Sire)

192
I THING
AMERIE
[2005]

R&B up-and-comer gets crazy in love

→ Hitmaker Rich Harrison knows how to make a girl sound ecstatically in love. After Beyoncé's "Crazy in Love," he rocketed Korean-American singer Amerie into the R&B A-list with a song that sounds the way you feel after a great first date. The cascading drums (lifted from New Orleans funk vets the Meters) and Amerie's top-of-her-range vocals bubble with the heart-pounding joy of not quite believing your luck.

Available on: *Touch* (Columbia)

MY TOP FIVE

IAN MCCULLOCH ECHO & THE BUNNYMEN
[b. 5/5/59]

CHANGES
DAVID BOWIE

I'M WAITING FOR THE MAN
THE VELVET UNDERGROUND

BROWN SUGAR
THE ROLLING STONES

ALL APOLOGIES
NIRVANA

SUZANNE
LEONARD COHEN

193
WALK THIS WAY
RUN-D.M.C.
[1986]

Rock and rap hook up, future Linkin Park members take notes

→ When Jam Master Jay's search for the heaviest beats led him to dig an old Aerosmith hit out of the crates, producer Rick Rubin suggested hooking up a collaboration. The result was rap-rock history, but don't try asking Reverend Run about his group's biggest hit. "We never liked that song," he kvetched a decade later. "They [Run and fellow rapper D.M.C.] were pissed off that someone was making them do it," explained Jay. "But I knew they was hot."

Available on: *Raising Hell* (Profile)

194
IF YOU LEAVE
OMD
[1986]

Synth-poppers secure their place in teen movie history

→ In the mid-'80s, this Liverpool duo made the transition from aloof synth-prodders to easy-on-the-ear pop stars, and this was their point of no return. Molly Ringwald's romantic dilemmas in *Pretty in Pink* made this jewel of melancholia an end-of-night prom classic. Says songwriter Andy McCluskey: "You realize you can't save the world with a pop song. But you can create something of beauty."

Available on: *Pretty in Pink* soundtrack (A&M)

195
MORE THAN THIS
ROXY MUSIC
[1982]

Because yuppies get sad too

→ How ironic that one of Roxy Music lounge lizard Bryan Ferry's slickest performances should reach a new audience via Bill Murray's shaky, boozy rendition in *Lost in Translation*. Where Murray stumbles, Ferry soars. More than 20 years later, it remains the Armani-clad acme of upwardly-mobile melancholy. "I think it's a beautiful song," says Murray. "But it is hard—especially after you've had several sake's."

Available on: *Avalon* (Virgin)

196
U CAN'T TOUCH THIS
MC HAMMER
[1990]

The pop-rap megahit that couldn't be stopped

→ MC Hammer might have made purists' toes curl, but even they couldn't get his Godzilla-sized breakout hit out of their heads. The Oakland MC founded the Puff Daddy school of flagrant sampling, in this case a chunk of Rick James's funk monster "Superfreak." If only he'd had Puffy's business sense—a decade after releasing the bestselling hip-hop album of all time, he was bankrupt.

Available on: *Please Hammer Don't Hurt 'Em* (Capitol)

197
LOVE REMOVAL MACHINE
THE CULT
[1987]

Leathery Britrockers take their School of Rock exams

→ Small wonder the surviving members of the Doors chose Ian Astbury to fill Jim Morrison's cowboy boots. Astbury made a career of copping rock's most well-worn moves with conviction. By 1987, these former goths had transformed into heavy metal revivalists. Billy Duffy's Keef-channelling riff and Astbury's priapic roar are cock-rock's base elements.

Available on: *Electric* (Beggars Banquet)

198
MACARENA (BAYSIDE BOYS MIX)
LOS DEL RIO
[1996]

The most infectious song of the 20th century isn't for everyone

→ "The Star-Spangled Banner"? "Freebird"? "Working for the Weekend"? No, this is the most divisive song in history. On UrbanDictionary.com, one poster defines Macarena as "the deadly disease that crippled 98% of the world." Haters shun the simple Spanish lyrics—the word "Macarena" recurs 632 times. For the rest of us, this tune can make a dance floor magically appear anywhere.

Available on: *Various Artists: 20th Century Time Capsule* (BMG)

199
DEBASER
PIXIES
[1989]

Eyeball-slicing fun from the alt-rock godfathers

→ Only Boston's finest would think to seek pop inspiration in *Un Chien Andalou*, a 1929 art movie directed by Luis Bunuel and co-written by surrealist Salvador Dali. Black Francis whoops the title and celebrates the film's most memorable scene ("slicing up eyeballs!") but he could be singing his grocery list and it wouldn't dampen this blast of feverish excitement. Forget verse and chorus—everything here is a hook.

Available on: *Doolittle* (4AD/Elektra)

200
THE SEED (2.0)
THE ROOTS
[2002]

Philly's live-rap stalwarts deliver definitive statement

→ Most collisions of rock and hip-hop are all about smacking together riffs and rhymes with a macho crunch, but the Roots' agile upgrade of "The Seed" by Atlanta-born multitasker Cody Chesnutt is more about sinew than muscle. Black Thought's verses twist Chesnutt's love-rat ambition to "fertilize another behind my lover's back" into a metaphor for musical cross-pollination. It's a stunning one-off: rap-rock with hips and brains.

Available on: *Phrenology* (MCA)

BEASTIES: PAUL NATKIN; MCCULLOCH: LFI

201
BUILDING A MYSTERY
SARAH MCLACHLAN
[1997]

Brooding Canadian lionizes a "beautiful, fucked-up man"

→ Not since Led Zeppelin howled about the land of the ice and snow has anyone written such a great song about an unknowable mystic. McLachlan's messiah sleeps in a church, has dreadlocks, wears sandals in winter—he sounds like kind of a dick, actually. But McLachlan honors him with a rapturous melody and echoing guitars. It's like Jimmy Page scoring an episode of *Buffy*.

Available on: *Surfacing* (Arista)

202
DEEP COVER
DR. DRE
[1992]

The good doctor scours the pound, finds new apprentice

→ Dre's first post-N.W.A project not only made "187" the best-known copspeak of all time, it also introduced then-20-year-old Calvin Broadus, a slow-drawl scene-stealer who would soon eclipse his master, stardom-wise. The single, released months before the funkier *The Chronic*, was a scary-as-shit salvo, boasting a relentless beat and a violent narrative about "killin' muthafuckas."

Available on: *Deep Cover* soundtrack (Epic)

203
RID OF ME
PJ HARVEY
[1993]

Don't mess with the big-voiced Brit from the tiny village

→ Polly Harvey was only 23 when she recorded "Rid," but sounded wise beyond her years—you don't write a song about infidelity this intense unless you've lived through a little pain. Opening with a calm but menacing drum-and-guitar prowl, the track eventually explodes with an indignant Harvey asking, "Don't you wish you never met her?" It's a twist-the-knife reminder of how far devotion goes.

Available on: *Rid of Me* (Island)

The "PJ Harvey" line of flower vases sold poorly.

204
LET'S KILL SATURDAY NIGHT
ROBBIE FULKS
[1998]

Agit-rocking against Thatcher

→ An alt-country hero, Fulks was primed for a breakthrough when he went major in the late '90s; it didn't happen, but at least he eked out a small hit with this tale of blue-collar blues. The barnstorming chorus is half-plea, half-threat, with a disillusioned Fulks complaining about his wife's work schedule, making him one of the rare twangstas to actually sing about missing his old lady.

Available on: *Let's Kill Saturday Night* (Geffen)

205
TAKE YOUR MAMA
SCISSOR SISTERS
[2004]

Elton John soundalikes help mend numerous mother-son rifts

→ Is it a coming-out anthem? A "Take This Job and Shove It" rant? Or just a song about kickin' it with momdukes? Whatever the Sisters were going for, they wound up with a fizzy, singalong, with Jake Shears hitting the high notes like Sir Reg on poppers. The band's only hit to date—and an instant classic in Europe—expect to hear this at wedding receptions and sports bars' Ladies Nights for the next, oh, 50 years.

Available on: *Scissor Sisters* (Universal)

206
THIS LOVE
MAROON 5
[2002]

Studly Angelenos in semi-nude video shocker!

→ The most popular white-soul ditty since Jamiroquai, "This Love" needed nearly two years to finally top the charts—but once it did, the band achieved a rock-pop-R&B crossover, with a sizable following among teeny-boppers and their secretly horny moms. This broad appeal was due not only to Adam Levine's *Innervisions*-styled vocals but also to his torso-baring turn in the steamy clip, where he apparently kept his promise to "keep her coming every night." Yowza!

Available on: *Songs About Jane* (Octone)

207
FRIENDS IN LOW PLACES
GARTH BROOKS
[1990]

Wealthy country crooner salutes ne'er-do-well audience

→ To his fans, "Friends" is the song that best defines Brooks, painting him as a well-intentioned yet hapless rebel. Thanks to its shout-along chorus, the honky-tonk pop anthem—penned by songwriting duo DeWayne Blackwell and Earl Bud Lee—is also the hit that broke Brooks to the 'burbs, celebrating whiskey-breathed miscreants everywhere.

Available on: *No Fences* (Capitol)

208
WORK FOR LOVE
MINISTRY
[1982]

Shock: Morbid, sordid mayhem masters used to skip like girls!

→ Here's a dirty secret: Before Ministry turned into the druggy dark lords of ugly industrial rattle (fan club name: the Piss Army), leader Al Jourgensen crooned like a David Bowie wannabe. His fake Brit accent lights up this cute, prancing complaint, but good luck finding the out-of-print CD it appears on: "*With Sym* is off the shelves for good," he recently crowed in an online chat. "I have the masters and burnt them ha ha."

Available on: *With Sympathy* (Arista)

209
IT WASN'T ME
SHAGGY
[2000]

Boombastard screws around, kinda repents

→ With a sexual appetite that would make R. Kelly raise his Hennessy in appreciation, dancehall dynamo Shaggy recounts a lurid tryst ("butt naked, bangin' on the bathroom floor") that he'll forever regret—mostly because he got caught. The titular deny-everything message perfectly suited for the last summer of the Clinton era. No wonder *Hot Shot* became one of the best-selling reggae albums of all time.

Available on: *Hot Shot* (MCA)

210
OH SHERRIE
STEVE PERRY
[1984]

Karaoke classic from feathered-haired Journeyman

→ During a late-night session for 1984's *Street Talk*, Perry's girlfriend began to doze off (understandable, considering she'd been hanging out with Perry all day). "Sherrie actually got tired and went to bed," Perry has said. "And the words came out." That was all he needed for his lone solo hit—a surging plea for reconciliation that Perry's pipes rendered beautifully. Thank God he wasn't dating someone named Esmerelda.

Available on: *Street Talk* (Columbia)

211
DUDE
BEENIE MAN
[2004]

***The* jam for van sex!**

→ For a song that extols the virtues of "Rudeboy lovin'" (i.e., lots and lots of sex), "Dude" is downright gentle at times, with a head-bobbing acoustic shuffle and bright flute loops; take away the steel drums and it could be mistaken for a gently lascivious sea shanty. A poppy revelation that stays grounded in its dancehall roots, the song gave Beenie his biggest hit, and most likely helped your parents get their swerve on during last year's Carnival Cruise vacation.

Available on: *Back to Basics* (Virgin)

ISLAND RECORDS/MICHAELOCHSARCHIVES.COM

Talking Heads couldn't get the hang of the "running man."

212
LAST NITE
THE STROKES
[2001]

"The Monkees with a drinking problem" blubber

→ Okay, so its bright guitar progression sounds a lot like "American Girl." But there was more to the Strokes' breakout single than an expertly ripped-off groove: Julian Casablancas's shrugging lines about "feelin' left out" when it comes to his woman neatly summarizes the mutual apathy that makes relationships so damned frustrating.

Available on: *Is This It* (RCA)

213
STOP DRAGGIN' MY HEART AROUND
TOM PETTY AND STEVIE NICKS
[1981]

Two heartbreakers unite in the studio

→ Petty and Nicks were never lovers, but they sound authentically desperate here. "The first time Tom and I sang it to each other," Nicks has said, "I knew that it was going to be a little bit of a career-changer." Indeed, Nicks had never rocked so devoutly, and Petty found a soulful side that he would hone throughout the decade.

Available on: *Timespace: The Best of Stevie Nicks* (Atlantic)

214
I WILL FOLLOW
U2
[1980]

They were on the outside—but not for long

→ The first song on U2's first album introduced the guitar sound that would define their work: A crisp-sounding vibration that reached all the way to the cheap seats—musicologists refer to this as "that cool chiming guitar thing the Edge does." The arena-ready clarion call also established Bono's trademark lyrical earnestness, one of the reasons the song remains a fan favorite and a staple of the band's recent tours.

Available on: *Boy* (Island)

MY TOP FIVE

GAVIN DEGRAW
[b. 2/4/78]

ALLENTOWN
BILLY JOEL

I GUESS THAT'S WHY THEY CALL IT THE BLUES
ELTON JOHN

LIVIN' ON A PRAYER
BON JOVI

ALIVE
PEARL JAM

REMEDY
THE BLACK CROWES

215
LIFE IS A HIGHWAY
TOM COCHRANE
[1992]

Canuck rocker rides his harmonica all night long

→ Before Cochrane snuck across the border with his feel-good boogie, radio programmers thought they'd never find a drive-at-five anthem worthy of usurping "Working for the Weekend." But with an easily digestible guitar run and ambiguous chorus ("Life is a highway/I wanna ride it all night long"), "Highway" remains a ballpark classic. Up north, Cochrane's still popular, even opening Canada's Live 8 show. Guess which song he played?

Available on: *Mad Mad World* (Capitol)

216
SCENARIO (REMIX)
A TRIBE CALLED QUEST
[1992]

Bo knows this one by heart

→ With a dramatic, looping bass cycle and a throw-down chorus ("Here we go, yo! Here we go, yo!"), "Scenario" proved Q-Tip and co. were more than just clever, sensitive types—they could get hands in the air and b-boys onto the dance floor. The result is a flawless group effort, with each member taking a verse, and a cap-off cameo from then-rookie Busta Rhymes; as a result, it's best listened to singing along and pogo-ing with a big mob of friends.

Available on: *The Low End Theory* (Jive)

217
MOVE YOUR FEET
JUNIOR SENIOR
[2003]

Technicolor Denmark duo combine hip-hop, homosexuality

→ Not quite rap, not quite disco, and alas, not quite as big here as it was worldwide, "Feet" is a merrily cartoonish dance number. Over a blipping keyboard hook and a bell-ringing melody, Jesper "Junior" Mortenson (the skinny, straight one) does his best Michael Jackson falsetto over the chorus, while Jeppe "Senior" Laursen (the big, gay one) goofily scats along—making for an appropriately smorgasbordic experience.

Available on: *D-D-Don't Stop the Beat* (Atlantic)

218
SEVEN NATION ARMY
WHITE STRIPES
[2003]

Hey, maybe Meg White *can* play the drums!

→ "Army" opens with a seven-note progression so chillingly deep, many fans thought Jack White had sold out and—*J'accuse!*—bought a bass guitar. But that stomping intro was just more six-string wizardry from White, who equips this Zeppelin-worthy epic with so much ferocity, it feels as if an actual army is backing him up. Meg's uncharacteristically steady tick-tock beat led to plenty of dance-floor mash-ups, as well as a cover by the Flaming Lips.

Available on: *Elephant* (V2)

219
GET BUSY
SEAN PAUL
[2002]

You or someone you know has totally done it to this song

→ Whether he's imploring you to get crunk, percolate, oscillate or just get jiggy, Sean Paul has only one thought in his head here: It's time to fool around. A summer-stretching hit that helped Paul's patois find audiences outside the dancehall, "Get Busy" even sounds like sex, with a click-clack rhythm and melodies that spiral down like beads of sweat. Who cares if you can't understand what he's saying?

Available on: *Dutty Rock* (Atlantic)

220
SEMI-CHARMED LIFE
THIRD EYE BLIND
[1997]

Semi-tolerable San Francisco pretty boys invent bubblegrunge

→ During 3EB's late-'90s heyday, they were despised by critics and boinked by movie stars—all thanks to this unassailable piece of pop poppycock. Kevin Cadogan's skip-rope guitar riff gets its hooks in within seconds, while Stephan Jenkins' "doo-doo-doo" refrain and white-boy rap are easy to mock but hard to ignore. Together, they more than make up for moronic lyrics such as, "I believe in the sand beneath my toes."

Available on: *Third Eye Blind* (Elektra)

221
ACADEMY FIGHT SONG
MISSION OF BURMA
[1981]

Boston punks describe a world that's dark and smells "like piss"

→ "Walk into my room/Ask me jerky questions" sounds like the start of a song from an '80s teen movie. Instead, it's the first bit of disgust in a 1981 single by the abrasive Boston foursome that inspired the Replacements and R.E.M. Over a waspish drum stomp and waves of ghost-world guitars, Clint Conley roars his contempt for the world: "I'm not not not not not not not," he repeats on the chorus.

Available on: *Signals, Calls and Marches* (Rykodisc)

222
MUNDIAN TO BACH KE (JAY-Z REMIX)
PANJABI MC
[2003]

Jay-Z endorses bhangra, India's hottest dance export

→ During a 2003 European jaunt, Jay-Z eased into the VIP section of a Swiss nightclub. When a thumping track packed the floor, he contacted the song's Indian-British creator and insisting on recording a remix. The beat's ingenious *Knight Rider* sample and tumbi riff were left intact, and when Jay added lyrics protesting the Iraqi war, a new era of hip-hop global consciousness was born.

Available on: *Beware* (Sequence)

TALKING HEADS: GEORGE DUBOSE/FI; DEGRAW: RAY MICKSHAW/WIREIMAGE.COM

223
TWO OF HEARTS
STACEY Q.
[1986]

Hey, remember the *Facts of Life* episode when Tootie bought the bong? But we digress ...

→ How do you know when you've crossed over from the discos to the playground? When you're gigging for Mrs. Garrett. In November of 1986, a chirpy Madonnabe performed her percolating clubland hit on *The Facts of Life*, ensuring a following among both coked-up partygoers and teenyboppers. "Hearts" was hard for anyone to resist, thanks to its lusty come-on: "I-I-I-I-I-I need, I need you."

Available on: *Better Than Heaven* (Atlantic)

224
ONCE IN A LIFETIME
TALKING HEADS
[1980]

And you might find yourself ... singing along!

→ Though it has since become one of the Talking Heads' most instantly recognizable songs, "Lifetime" flopped when it was released as a single. "It was perceived as too funky for the rock stations," Byrne has said, and maybe he's right: An itchy catalogue of suburban wish-fulfillment, it chugs along on a bass line that sounds as if it's bubbling from underneath. But DJs loved the African-inspired rhythms, making it a club hit.

Available on: *Remain in Light* (Sire)

225
FAST CAR
TRACY CHAPMAN
[1988]

Sighing folk number about poor towns and drunken dads. Par-tay!

→ Chapman was just a shy 24-year-old when this acoustic daydream turned her into a neo-folkie poster girl. Released at the tail end of the '80s, "Car" was an oped piece with a plot, as Chapman distilled poverty, alcoholism and homelessness into wistful escapism. The guitar sweep made this a Top 10 hit, and soon Chapman was performing to sold-out crowds—no doubt playing for some of the same callous yuppies she was savaging.

Available on: *Tracy Chapman* (Elektra)

226
ALRIGHT
SUPERGRASS
[1995]

Giddy British twerps find joy in simple pleasures

→ With the possible exception of Oasis, their countrymen and chief eyebrow rivals, no band sang about sitting around and smoking cigarettes with such infectious glee as this merry trio from Oxford. With an irresistible cross-strain of Buzzcocks vocals and "Crocodile Rock" piano, this anthem to young scenester frivolity wound up in a montage of young scenester frivolity in *Clueless*. Smoke a fag, put it out? It feels alright!

Available on: *I Should Coco* (Capitol)

The White Stripes, after beating the piss out of Dumbo.

227
WHERE'S YOUR HEAD AT
BASEMENT JAXX
[2001]

English knob-twiddlers get rowdy on the dance floor

→ Five years after their bass-heavy "Fly Life," British producers Felix Buxton and Simon Ratcliffe went dark. Shout-sung by soccer hooligans, the title phrase echoes over a vertiginous Gary Numan sample—it's the sound of an unmoored community, a ship pitching on rough seas. The sparse lyrics urge not abandon but maintenance: "Don't let the walls cave in on you"—excellent advice for post-9/11 clubbing.

Available on: *Rooty* (XL)

228
HATE TO SAY I TOLD YOU SO
THE HIVES
[2000]

Swedish punks hate to say it, but will

→ Originally released when they were just another crew of natty, color-coordinated teens from Fagersta, Sweden, this song became the Hives' nyah-nyah victory cry in 2002, when it was re-released during the great garage-rock renaissance. They stormed England and the Americas, but unlike their oft-cited co-revivalists the Strokes and White Stripes, the Hives had breeding enough to rock ascots.

Available on: *Veni Vidi Vicious* (Burning Heart/Epitaph)

229
EDGE OF SEVENTEEN
STEVIE NICKS
[1981]

Fleetwood Mac's mystic chanteuse goes solo, enables Jack Black booty call

→ Perhaps sick of singing ex-squeeze Lindsey Buckingham's screw-you-Stevie tune "Go Your Own Way," Nicks took time off Fleetwood Mac to record a solo album led by this intense rumination on the deaths of a beloved uncle and John Lennon. The guitar line later powered Destiny's Child's "Bootylicious" and helped Jack Black mesmerize an uptight headmistress in *School of Rock*.

Available on: *Bella Donna* (Modern)

230
WILD THING
TONE-LOC
[1988]

Hoarse Los Angeleno talks dirty and gets paid

→ Though a rapper in his own right, fresh-faced rhymescribe Young MC needed a voice with the right mojo for this song's particular theme: the wondrous act of love. Enter the raspy larynx of Anthony Smith, a.k.a. Antonio Loco, plus additional bump 'n' grind from Van Halen's "Jamie's Cryin'"—sampled by (pre-Beck) producers the Dust Brothers. Thus Tone-Loc became the first actual black person with a Top Ten rap album.

Available on: *Loc-ed After Dark* (Delicious Vinyl/Rhino)

231
SOUR TIMES
PORTISHEAD
[1994]

Creepy trip-hop smash sends chills from Bristol, England

→ British mixologist Geoff Barrow spiked this cocktail of slinky, post-hip-hop beats with a twangy sample of "The Danube Incident" from *Mission: Impossible* while former bar singer Beth Gibbons keened like a torch singer contemplating suicide. As Gibbons told a reporter in 1995, "I've never been much of a party person." Kept haute shoe stores in noir ambience through the '90s.

Available on: *Dummy* (Go! Discs/London)

DEAN CHALKLEY/NME/IPC+ SYNDICATION

LL Cool J: Can't live without his comically oversized radio.

232
THEY WANT EFX
DAS EFX
[1992]

Hickory-dickory, zippedy-doo-dah, shiver-me-timbers rap

→ Over a bluesy beat by EPMD, Virginia State college buds Dray Weston and Skoob Hines spat stuttering surrealism that brought rap's pop-cult references to a new high (referencing at least five TV commercials and one Snuffleupagus in a single verse). Chances for career longevity were promptly smashed by 13-year-olds Kriss Kross, who adopted the same riggeddy-raggedy rhyme style in "Jump," banishing Das EFX forever to the novelty bin.

Available on: *Dead Serious* (East West)

233
BLACK AND WHITE
THE DB'S
[1981]

R.E.M. pals bring inspired energy while saying "Buh-bye" to a girl

→ The Bongos. The Individuals. Let's Active. Mostly forgotten, these combos were second cousins, sharing an avocation: British guitar pop stretched with dizzy harmonies. The dB's were the best among them, Winston-Salem sons who moved to NYC and fueled a scene that never spread beyond those two cities. Often dazzling, they peaked with this fleet kiss-off to an ex-girlfriend, turning sarcastic taunts into bursting hooks.

Available on: *Stands for Decibels* (IRS)

MY TOP FIVE

JIM JAMES
MY MORNING JACKET
[b. 4/27/78]

LEADER OF THE BAND
DAN FOGELBERG

THE RAINBOW CONNECTION
KERMIT THE FROG

FEELING YOURSELF DISINTEGRATE
THE FLAMING LIPS

NEXT LIFETIME (LIVE)
ERYKAH BADU

FROM HANK TO HENDRIX
NEIL YOUNG

234
HERE I GO AGAIN
WHITESNAKE
[1987]

Tawny Kitaen blazes trail for video hoochie-mamas

→ A mighty heartbreaker whereby ex–Deep Purple singer David Coverdale became the Moussed Zeus of MTV, this song also helped introduce hair-metal video's dancing-hoochie motif. Said hoochie, Tawny Kitaen, minced in three more Whitesnake clips, married Coverdale, divorced him, then married big-league pitcher Chuck Finley, later getting arrested for kicking him with high heels while he was driving.

Available on: *Whitesnake* (Geffen)

235
WE DON'T HAVE TO TAKE OUR CLOTHES OFF
JERMAINE STEWART
[1986]

Squeaky R&B dance song cannily pretends to be anti-sex

→ Prince had spent the last few years writing songs about fucking his sister and getting head from newlyweds. What was left to endorse but chastity? After Nancy Reagan introduced her "Just Say No" initiative against kids using drugs, Jermaine Stewart cut this skittering dance song, chiding a suitor for getting too handsy too fast.

Available on: *Various Artists: Old School Vol. 7* (Thump)

236
WHERE IS MY MIND?
THE PIXIES
[1988]

Crashing anthem asks poignant question about brain

→ Already celebrated masters of noise, space and mutilation imagery, the Pixies found true greatness on this song—a "Crimson and Clover" gone nuclear—with its stately guitar arpeggio, haunting wordless vocal dissonance by Kim Deal and Black Francis's ode to mental disintegration. Director David Fincher used its aura of woozy beauty to accompany the closing image of *Fight Club*: a skyline tumbling to terrorist bombs.

Available on: *Surfer Rosa* (4AD/Elektra)

237
SET IT OFF
STRAFE
[1984]

A soundtrack to late-night debauchery or afternoon basketball

→ This gurgling house anthem is far more than the sum of its parts, which include shrieking whistles, moping buzz-synths and refrains about whether or not you would like the party to commence, and if so, how quickly. "I used to love 'Set It Off,'" said Boy George. "People would go crazy to this track." It's now the only song anthologized both on house-music collections and *Jock Jams*.

Available on: *Various Artists: The Perfect Beats, Volume 2* (Tommy Boy)

238
EVERYBODY HURTS
R.E.M.
[1992]

Garbled southern band bust out the power ballad

→ R.E.M. took inspiration from two '70 hits: The opening guitar line is stolen from Chicago's prom ballad "Colour My World," and Michael Stipe wrote the words while thinking about Nazareth's "Love Hurts." Sometimes, dross spawns greatness. "Everybody Hurts" is an invitation to feel compassion. "Now it's time to sing along," Stipe croons, and as recently as Live 8, millions have.

Available on: *Automatic for the People* (Warner Bros.)

239
DO YOU MISS ME
JOCELYN ENRIQUEZ
[1994]

Bittersweet dance track shows why listening to the radio is sad

→ Latin Freestyle music didn't create stars, so there's little to know about Jocelyn Enriquez: A cute Filipino-American, her favorite film was *Mr. Holland's Opus*. But her breakthrough single is its own opus. The tale is mournful—missing her boyfriend, the singer hears their favorite song and wonders if he misses her too—but the electronic beat seems to give her confidence, and the song turns into something closer to a taunt.

Available on: *Various Artists: MTV Party to Go Vol. 10* (Tommy Boy)

240
ALL THE SMALL THINGS
BLINK-182
[1999]

The San Diegans who put the punk'd in punk.

→ Blink-182's biggest hit started out as a love letter to a girlfriend and four leatherclad dudes. "I wanted to write a song with na-na's, 'cause I love the Ramones," singer-guitarist Tom DeLonge has recalled. "I thought, 'I'll write this song about my chick, and it'll be an ode to the Ramones too.'" "All the Small Things" hit No. 6 and inspired one of the cleverest videos ever: a spot-on send-up of boy-band dance moves.

Available on: *Enema of the State* (MCA)

241
BITTERSWEET SYMPHONY
THE VERVE
[1997]

English rock band make brilliant song with one small catch

→ Like a cursed monkey's paw, this stately elegy helped make and break these long-laboring psychedelic rockers. Who knew a harmless little sample from a symphonic version of the Rolling Stones' "The Last Time" would be so volatile? The band re-formed to put out this album, only to have a lawsuit award 100% of the publishing rights from this, their first smash hit, to the Stones. They broke up a year later, bitterly.

Available on: *Urban Hymns* (Virgin)

LL COOL J: MICHAELOCHSARCHIVES.COM; JAMES: DANNY CLINCH

242
I CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT MY RADIO
LL COOL J
[1985]

Hello, my name is LL and I'm a Hip-hop-a-holic

→ After inaugurating their label with James Todd Smith's debut single, "I Need a Beat," Def Jam founders Rick Rubin and Russell Simmons brought the 17-year-old MC back into the studio to cut this genre-making hit. Team Def made a boulevard-stomping declaration of self so confident the author even imagines his way into your tape player—"Lookin' at the wires behind the cassette." We still can't get him out of there.

Available on: *Radio* (Def Jam)

243
BEING BORING
PET SHOP BOYS
[1990]

An aging synth-fop looks back, mourns the '80s AIDS crisis

→ Neil Tennant—older, sadder and a better songwriter—wistfully recalls the years when he and his gang "were never holding back or worried that/Time would come to an end." Each verse ends mentioning an unboring era ("the 1920s," "the 1970s") that get disturbingly closer to the present, when finally this survivor of the '80s sighs, "All the people I was kissing/Some are here and some are missing." A heartbreaker.

Available on: *Behavior* (Capitol)

244
INSTITUTIONALIZED
SUICIDAL TENDENCIES
[1983]

Spoken-word thrash from the rubber room

→ SoCal punk Mike Muir deserves an honorary writing credit for *Heathers*, *The O.C.* and anything else about teen dysfunction for this four-minute rant, an account of generational miscommunication in which a request for a Pepsi lands the singer in the psych ward. Just to prove they were nuts, the band included it in a remake of their debut album 10 years later.

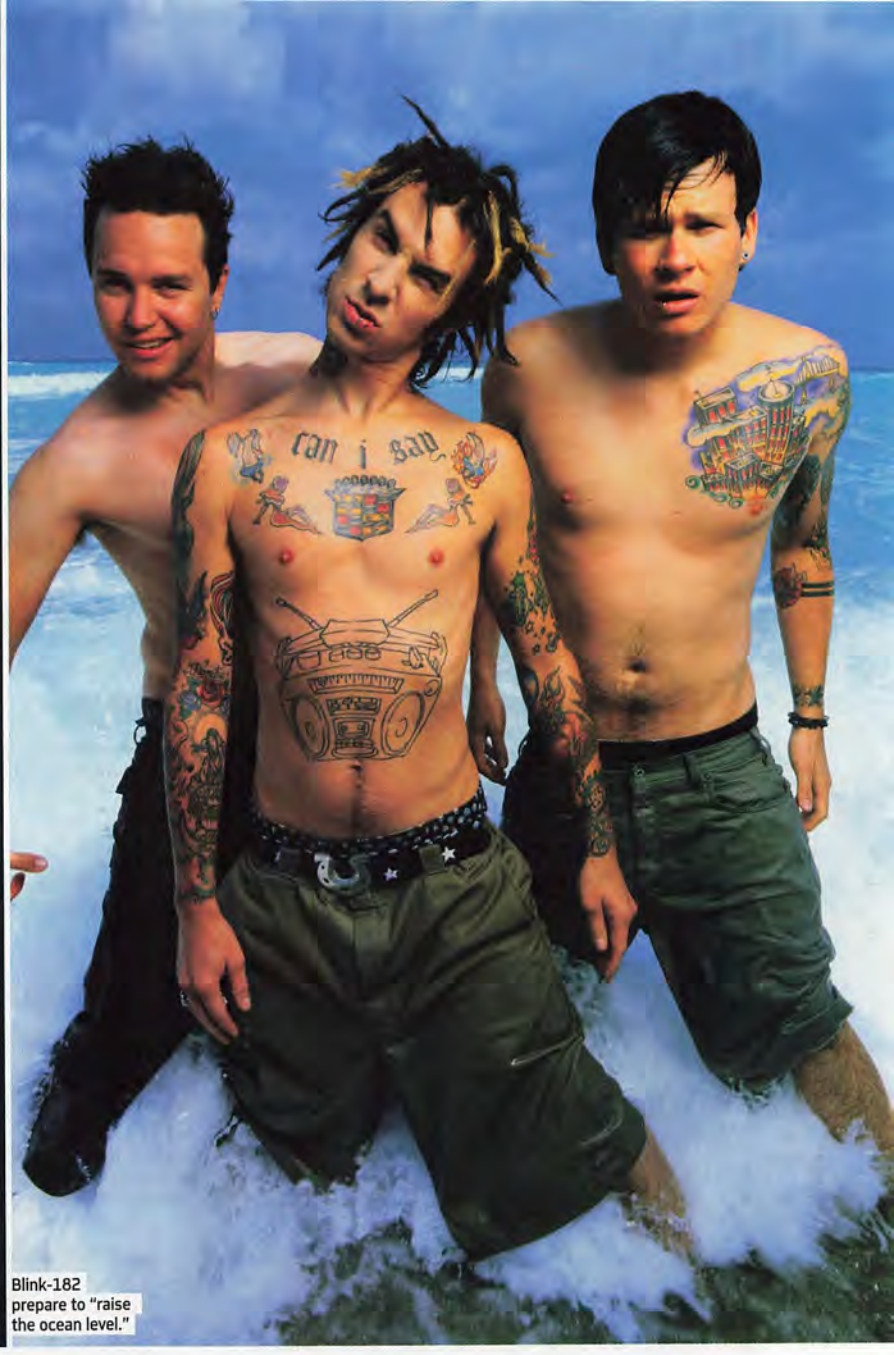
Available on: *Suicidal Tendencies* (Frontier)

245
I'M NOT OK (I PROMISE)
MY CHEMICAL ROMANCE
[2004]

Emo goths assure nation all is not well in their love lives

It's a time-tested WB plot that singer Gerard Way happened to live: art-schlub loves hottie, but hottie loves jock doofus and considers art-schlub "a friend." Add a frantic emo-guitar charge and a shriekingly catchy chorus, and you've got a new entry in the breakup-song canon. Plus, the video was a dead-on sendup of a teen movie preview.

Available on: *Three Cheers for Sweet Revenge* (Reprise)



Blink-182 prepare to "raise the ocean level."

246
RUMP SHAKER
WRECKZ-N-EFFECT
[1992]

Surefire dance hit keeps its eyes on the moneymaker

You don't have to give your song a banging beat, a crypto-pornographic chorus and a video with slo-mos of female buttshaking to have a hit. But it sure didn't hurt these guys. "All I wanna do is zooma-zoom-zoom-zoom in the boom-boom," chanted rapper Markell Riley (brother of producer Teddy Riley) as he gazed at the titular anatomical features bouncing along a beach. What did he mean exactly? Perhaps closer study of the video will provide some answers.

Available on: *Hard or Smooth* (MCA)

247
DOWNTOWN TRAIN
TOM WAITS
[1985]

Gorgeous love letter to female commuter

→ Back before he became an avant-garde coot singing through megaphones, Tom Waits wrote songs like this: a sweet, sympathetic valentine to a female stranger on a subway—punctuated with elegant simplicity by avant-guitarist Marc Ribot. His thanks? The song gets recorded afterwards by Patty Smyth, then Bob Seger, then Rod Stewart—who scores a Top Ten hit with it five years later. No wonder Waits went weird.

Available on: *Rain Dogs* (Island)

248
CARELESS WHISPER
GEORGE MICHAEL
[1984]

The greatest sax hook in pop history

→ When you spend the first few years of your career chirping cheeky dance tracks while encased in white shorts so tight you look like Elton John's pool boy, a ballad can feel like artistic integrity. In this sleazy confession of infidelity, George Michael pairs Biblical wisdom ("Guilty feet have got no rhythm") with a sax refrain that mopes like a lovestruck teenage boy. The result is something new: St. Tropez soul.

Available on: *Ladies & Gentlemen: The Best of George Michael* (Columbia)

249
FOR LOVERS
WOLFMAN FEATURING PETE DOHERTY
[2004]

Resigned, debauched ballad

→ "What does she see in him?" skinny, pale lads muttered when model Kate Moss took up with skinny, pale Pete Doherty, the heroin addict who helped make the Libertines the terrors of English rock. But Doherty's got a genuine sense of beauty, best heard on this tingling piano-and-strings ballad about the joy and sadness of escape.

Available on: *Various Artists: The Rough Trade Field Guide to Music, Vol. 1* (Rough Trade)

250
MOVE YA BODY
NINA SKY
[2004]

Mmmm ... sisters

In the long, libidinous history of pop, countless songs have taught listeners the delicate art of body-movin'. But only one of them was sung by a pair of smoking-hot 18-year-old twins. Willowy Queens natives Natalie and Nicole Albino rode this somersaulting, bongoing, handclapping riddim to the top of every DJ's playlist last year. Haters dismissed it as lightweight, derivative, meaningless fluff—everything a summer hit should be.

Available on: *Nina Sky* (Universal)

MARK SELIGER

We told Afrika not to try and feed the crocodiles.

251
DON'T BELIEVE THE HYPE
PUBLIC ENEMY 1988
Taking down The Man one insanely funky bar at a time.

252
BORN IN THE U.S.A.
BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN 1984
Ass-kicking protest song disguised as ass-kicking patriot-rock.

253
LA DI DA DI
DOUG E. FRESH 1985
Rap's first human beatbox teams with Slick Rick, its first eyepatched storytelling genius.

254
BIG PIMPIN'
JAY-Z 1999
Ah, the common pleasures of 60-foot yachts and multiple sex partners ...

255
A PRETTY GIRL IS LIKE
MAGNETIC FIELDS 1999
Clever crooning about dumb melodies and dumber cuties.

256
LOOKING FOR THE PERFECT BEAT
AFRIKA BAMBAATAA & SOUL SONIC FORCE 1983
Extraterrestrial electro-funk from the Timbaland of the Reagan years.

257
C'MON N' RIDE IT (THE TRAIN)
QUAD CITY DJS 1996
Disco booty bass that kills at bar mitzvahs.

258
GENIUS OF LOVE
TOM TOM CLUB 1981
Catchy, lighter than air disco-pop from the Talking Heads spinoff.

259
KISS
PRINCE 1986
Hyper-minimal funk surrounds Prince's tickling falsetto come-ons.

260
GOING BACK TO CALI
LL COOL J 1987
Horntastic Rick Rubin joint about the West Coast's shortcomings.

261
CALL ME
BLONDIE 1980
New Wave ex-Bunny begs lover to reach out and touch her.

262
ISLANDS IN THE STREAM
KENNY ROGERS FEATURING DOLLY PARTON 1983
Penned by the Bee Gees, sung by two country legends—it's almost not fair.

263
ACE OF SPADES
MOTÖRHEAD 1980
Biker-punk squall about being a leather-clad, all-around badass.

264
I WANNA DANCE WITH SOMEBODY (WHO LOVES ME)
WHITNEY HOUSTON 1987
Or somebody who can score me some primo weed, whichever.

265
I WANT YOUR (HANDS ON ME)
SINEAD O'CONNOR 1987
Funk-inflected, chant-heavy Irish foreplay jam.

266
FREE FALLIN'
TOM PETTY 1989
A rallying cry for restless, hormonally hopped-up youth everywhere.

267
MALIBU
HOLE 1998
A Billy Corgan co-write, it's Courtney Love at her barely-hinged best.

268
WITH OR WITHOUT YOU
U2 1987
Guitars wail, Bono weeps and stadiums worldwide simultaneously melt.

269
TAKE YOUR TIME (DO IT RIGHT)
THE S.O.S. BAND 1980
Impossibly funky disco about hating on one-minute men.

270
FLEX
MAD COBRA 1992
Unabashedly horny—and one of dancehall's earliest crossover hits.

271
DON'T STOP BELIEVIN'
JOURNEY 1981
Fist-pumping underdog fight song + lots of beer = karaoke bliss.

272
ROCK THE CASBAH
THE CLASH 1982
London punks spread Mideast peace the old-fashioned way: with disco records.

273
KEEP ME IN YOUR HEART
WARREN ZEVON 2003
A bittersweet goodbye from the late, great Werewolf of Chicago.

274
BRILLIANT DISGUISE
BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN 1987
Tortured confessional about what happens when the flame goes cold.

275
REAL LOVE
MARY J. BLIGE 1992
Every thug's favorite diva speaks the truth on her crossover hit.

276
HOLD ON LOOSELY
.38 SPECIAL 1981
Slick southern boogie with a word to the wise: Dude, chill!

277
I WANT YOU
ELVIS COSTELLO 1986
Britpunk poet seethes his way through a deliciously nasty love letter.

278
STAN
EMINEM 2002
Em scrutinizes accusations of corrupting the kids by rapping as a corrupted kid.

Hole, back in Courtney's more dignified days.

BAMBAATAA: PAUL NATKIN/WIREIMAGE.COM; HOLE: LUIS SANCHIS/ART & COMMERCE ANTHOLOGY

279
ROCK 'N' ROLL HIGH SCHOOL
THE RAMONES 1980
Bristling radio-punk about classes you'd never cut to get drunk in the parking lot.

280
JUST LIKE A PILL
PINK 2001
Her no-good man's got her hooked—so Pink kicks him to the curb.

281
SEXY BOY
AIR 1998
Purring Gallictronica for the chillout room or the bedroom.

282
OH BOY
CAM'RON 2002
Harlem word-wizard rhymes "Van Damme 'em" with "blam blam 'em." Genius!

283
LIPS LIKE SUGAR
ECHO AND THE BUNNYMEN 1987
Swoony, shimmery Liverpudlians get their Betty Crocker on.

284
DOWN BY THE WATER
PJ HARVEY 1995
Haunted lyrics about child-eating fish from a Thom Yorke–approved punkstress.

285
DON'T TELL ME
MADONNA 2000
Ms. Ciccone compares herself to a force of nature over hop-scotching Mirwais techno.

286
I'VE BEEN WAITING
MATTHEW SWEET 1991
Sweet alt-rock bard meets Miss Right.

287
HEAD OVER HEELS
TEARS FOR FEARS 1985
Like "Crazy in Love," but new wave—and Donnie Darko–approved.

288
"ONE ARMED SCISSOR"
AT THE DRIVE-IN 2000
Jagged, self-destructive punk from the dudes now fronting the Mars Volta.

JOHN JAY

HOW WE DID IT

BECAUSE AN UNDERTAKING LIKE THIS IS MORE COMPLICATED THAN LETTING A ROOMFUL OF MONKEYS DECIDE. AND BECAUSE THE MONKEYS SAID NO.

IN ORDER to authoritatively and decisively come up with the 500 best songs of the past 25 years, the editors of *Blender* had to, in good conscience, listen to every single song released in the past 25 years—approximately five years per editor. Including B-sides. Including Crazy Town B-sides.

To tackle such a daunting task unencumbered by such mundane responsibilities as "running a magazine" or "living our lives," we rented a large cabin in the Adirondacks and spent the entire month of August downloading, listening, scavenging records from local libraries and estate sales, listening more, taking copious notes, arguing and occasionally baking. Kind of like *The Real World* but with more irresponsible binge-drinking and fewer good-looking people.

Each editor then presented a meticulously assembled list of carefully thought-out suggestions, which was then ridiculed by his or her peers and replaced with artists whose labels lavished us with coke and hookers.

It wasn't easy—feelings were hurt, relationships were strained, positions were terminated—but the results were worth it. Please send all complaints to rob.tannenbaum@blender.com.

BDF Beiersdorf

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AT LEAST, NOT THE MEN WHO USE THIS STUFF.

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NIVEA FOR MEN MORE EVOLVED SKINCARE

Elastica later went on to be called the Scissor Sisters.

289
YOU SPIN ME 'ROUND (LIKE A RECORD)
DEAD OR ALIVE 1985
Dizzying, vaguely sinister dance-pop from British ex-Goths.

290
ONLY SHALLOW
MY BLOODY VALENTINE 1991
Eerily angelic vocals and monstrous guitar squall.

291
PEOPLE WHO DIED
THE JIM CARROLL BAND 1980
Darkly comic punk eulogy from the *Basketball Diaries* guy

292
LARGER THAN LIFE
BACKSTREET BOYS 1999
The Boys give their fans a big, wet, Pro-Tooled thank-you kiss.

293
CONNECTION
ELASTICA 1994
A blatant Wire ripoff that's sexier than Wire ever were.

294
BLACK
PEARL JAM 1991
Eddie Vedder shares his view on romance—and it's fucked up!

295
OWNER OF A LONELY HEART
YES 1983
It's less prog, more cowbell on this No. 1 chunk of pop existentialism.

296
SAVE ME
AIMEE MANN 1999
A heartstring-tugging, *Magnolia*-endorsed plea for redemption.

297
NOVEMBER RAIN
GUNS N' ROSES 1991
Nine glorious minutes of quintessential Axl excess.

298
I NEED TO KNOW
MARC ANTHONY 1999
The diminutive Mr. Lo obsesses over an ambivalent hottie.

299
SMOOTH CRIMINAL
MICHAEL JACKSON 1987
Jacko gets creepy—not Jesus Juice creepy, but danceably sinister creepy.

300
EVERYTHING ZEN
BUSH 1996
Brilliant, nonsensical scrunge about sex and Elvis.

301
IN BETWEEN DAYS
THE CURE 1985
Aqua Net–loving Brits take a break from gloomy dirges for a gloomy bopper.

302
LOSER
BECK 1994
Giddy Spanglish non sequiturs from a sucker with no self-esteem.

303
KISSING THE LIPLESS
THE SHINS 2003
Natalie Portman's favorite Albuquerqueans warble their indie-rock hearts out.

304
HOT FOR TEACHER
VAN HALEN 1984
Pasadena's finest bar band struggle to keep their pencils in their pants.

305
PRETTY IN PINK
PSYCHEDELIC FURS 1986
The Dylan-ish new wave anthem that scored a million Molly Ringwald crushes.

306
SAY YES
ELLIOTT SMITH 1997
The tragic cult hero's sparest, most heartbreakingly pretty song.

307
I GET AROUND
TUPAC 1993
'Pac gets playalistically raunchy on his breakout hit.

308
HOLD ME NOW
THOMPSON TWINS 1984
A new wave let's-stay-together plea so cornball it works.

309
EX-FACTOR
LAURYN HILL 1998
Devastating breakup lament, rumored to be about fellow Fugee Wyclef Jean.

310
FIRESTARTER
THE PRODIGY 1997
Brit techno giants invent a brand new genre: Nightmaretronica.

311
COME PICK ME UP
RYAN ADAMS 2000
A tearful fuck-you to a cheating ex. The perfect drinking-alone song.

312
SMOOTH OPERATOR
SADE 1984
Quiet Storm soul so breezy it can be used as a Freon substitute.

313
BAWITDABA
KID ROCK 1998
Detroit's other white rapper big-ups hookers, meth fiends and, not least, himself.

314
LOVE VIGILANTES
NEW ORDER 1985
Lovely dance-rock about the difference between patriotism and love.

315
EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE
POLICE 1983
About the blurry line between true love and stealing someone's panties.

316
CALIFORNIA STARS
BILLY BRAGG AND WILCO 1998
Cool, breezy folk-rock, perfect for the back porch swing.

317
WHITE FLAG
DIDO 2003
A.k.a. *Bridget Jones 3: Adventures in Trip-Hop.*

318
HA
JUVENILE 1998
Avant garde, mushmouthed rhymes over a candy-coated synth beat.

319
GENIE IN A BOTTLE
CHRISTINA AGUILERA 1999
A coy, curvaceous abstinence lesson, from her pre-assless-chaps days.

320
TYRONE
ERYKAH BADU 1997
Strikes a souful blow for the sisters, with one-liners a brother can appreciate.

321
JANE SAYS
JANE'S ADDICTION 1988
Two-chord calypso-metal about a real-life battered L.A. junkie.

322
CONSTANT CRAVING
K.D. LANG 1992
Androgynous Canuck popster evokes burning desire (for a lover or White Castle).

323
BLACK STEEL
TRICKY 1995
A rocking, trip-hop ode to draft-dodging.

324
SLACK MOTHERFUCKER
SUPERCHUNK 1990
North Carolina guitar band put the indie in indignant.

325
JUMP AROUND
HOUSE OF PAIN 1992
Irish rappers with "more rhymes than the Bible's got psalms," i.e., one song's worth.

326
BATTERY
METALLICA 1986
Before therapy, before Napster, these Cali metallers rawk hard.

327
SLOW JAMZ
KANYE WEST FEATURING TWISTA AND JAMIE FOXX 2004
An old-school celebration of R&B's chief goal: gettin' that booty!

328
DAMN IT FEELS GOOD TO BE A GANGSTA
GETO BOYS 1992
The dope man's national anthem.

329
POTHOLES IN MY LAWN
DE LA SOUL 1989
Quaint, botanically minded hip-hop about thieving MCs.

330
CAN'T DENY IT
FABOLOUS 2001
East Coast hip-hop at its breeziest, boastiest and blingiest.

331
WAITING FOR THE SUN
THE JAYHAWKS 1992
Twin Cities alt-country vets' dark travelin' song.

332
I WONDER IF I TAKE YOU HOME
LISA LISA AND CULT JAM 1985
Sing-songy B-girl funk even the Black Eyed Peas can't ruin.

333
CANNONBALL
THE BREEDERS 1993
Careening noise pop from the Deal sisters.

334
TEEN AGE RIOT
SONIC YOUTH 1988
NYC noiseniks go pop (kinda) over seven minutes of heaven.

335
EVERYBODY, EVERYBODY
BLACK BOX 1990
Criminally buoyant Eurodisco, proven to help drunk wedding guests get down.

336
TIME AFTER TIME
CYNDI LAUPER 1983
Tear-streaked snapshot of long-gone love. Utterly beautiful.

337
KILLING ME SOFTLY WITH HIS SONG
FUGEES 1996
Brooklyn-via-Haiti roots-rap trio peaked with this Roberta Flack update.

338
OUTFIT
DRIVE-BY TRUCKERS 2003
Alabama gunslingers teach a Southern boy how to be a Southern man.

ELASTICA: NEIL COOPER/IDOLS

339
AIN'T NOTHIN' GOIN' ON BUT THE RENT
GWEN GUTHRIE 1986
"No romance without finance!" says this proudly golddigging R&B jam.

340
SONG 2
BLUR 1997
A thunderous grunge send-up that ended up a grunge staple. Woo-hoo!

341
WHAT HAVE YOU DONE FOR ME LATELY
JANET JACKSON 1986
Jam-and-Lewis sassfest from when she kept her boobs to herself.

342
SEETHER
VERUCA SALT 1994
Men call it PMS. Women call it rage. These grunge-popsters call it seether.

343
PASSIONATE KISSES
LUCINDA WILLIAMS 1988
Alt-county goddess tells us what a girl really wants.

344
FREAKS COME OUT AT NIGHT
WHODINI 1984
Vintage electro-rap about blowing off curfew.

345
STILL TIPPIN'
MIKE JONES 2005
The ideal song for sipping sizzurp and driving slower than grandma.

346
BLOCK ROCKIN' BEATS
CHEMICAL BROTHERS 1997
The nerve-jangling tech-splosion that introduced the Bros to the States.

347
GIRLS
BEASTIE BOYS 1986
3 SWMs seek ladies to chill at White Castle with. New wave hairdos a must.

348
INDEPENDENT WOMEN PART I
DESTINY'S CHILD 2001
Mastercard-carrying R&B roar for all Beyoncés and Lucy Lius.

349
ROXANNE ROXANNE
U.T.F.O. 1984
Early rap geeks playfully get no play.

350
STACY'S MOM
FOUNTAINS OF WAYNE 2003
Glossy guitar pop as flawless as the titular MILF.

351
BUFFALO GALS
MALCOLM MCLAREN 1983
Electro-tinged, Appalachian-style hip-hop that helped inspire Eminem's "Without Me."

352
HEART SHAPED BOX
NIRVANA 1993
Blistering riffs, lyrics about cancer-eating and other all-around cheer.

353
GAMES WITHOUT FRONTIERS
PETER GABRIEL 1980
The former Genesis frontman bemoans war in a brooding synthscape.

354
ARMY OF ME
BJÖRK 1995
Icelandic sprite bares her teeth on brutal industrial stomper.

355
SAVE IT FOR LATER
ENGLISH BEAT 1982
Jangly, multiracial Britpop, sprinkled with sly fellatio jokes.

356
ATOMIC DOG
GEORGE CLINTON 1982
Mr. Funkadelic goes solo with a hook Snoop Dogg owes his entire career to.

357
NEVER TOO MUCH
LUTHER VANDROSS 1981
Late crooner went from backup singer to star with this candlelight smoochfest.

358
WALL OF DEATH
RICHARD AND LINDA THOMPSON 1982
Joyful tribute to centrifugal force from legendary folk-rock divorcees.

359
I WISH
SKEE-LO 1995
A joyous celebration of all things unplaya.

Björk considers changing manicurist.

The members of Devo are mortified to discover that they all wore the same outfit to the photo shoot.

360
HELP YOU ANN
LYRES 1984
Scorching garage rock about swearing (however disingenuously) to be a better man.

361
SHOW ME LOVE
ROBYN 1997
Swedish teen-pop starlet gets her Spears on.

362
FIX UP, LOOK SHARP
DIZZEE RASCAL 2003
The skull-rattling beat that made guttersnipe Dylan Mills grime's poster boy.

363
TAINTED LOVE
SOFT CELL 1981
A '60s soul breakup ballad, reborn as eerie synth pop.

364
BUDDY HOLLY
WEEZER 1994
All my honkeys, proudly geeky, throw your hands up at me!

365
ROCK BOX
RUN-D.M.C. 1984
A raucous party where cock-rockers and b-boys are both invited.

366
I TOUCH MYSELF
DIVINYLS 1991
Because who said songs about female masturbation had to be subtle?

367
PARANOID ANDROID
RADIOHEAD 1997
Six minutes of sublime, incomprehensible bile.

368
SEVEN YEAR ACHE
ROSANNE CASH 1981
Johnny's daughter floats through a slow-burning country hit.

369
TEENAGE DIRTBAG
WHEATUS 2000
Power-pop supergeek anthem proves nerdy guys (sometimes) finish first.

370
VOICES CARRY
'TIL TUESDAY 1985
In her MTV heyday, Aimee Mann laments a dickhead boyfriend.

371
ROAM
B-52'S 1989
Georgia co-eds make love sound like a really cool Toyota commercial.

372
PARTY UP (UP IN HERE)
DMX 1999
Grade-A pop thuggery, boasting one of rap's great opening lines.

373
WHIP IT
DEVO 1980
Flower-potted fun from the Ohio weirdos who brought misanthropy to MTV.

DEVO: GOVERT DE ROOS/LFI; BJÖRK: STEVE DOUBLE/RETNA LTD.

The Bangles' Susanna Hoffs gets stuck in flypaper.

374
ROSA PARKS
OUTKAST 1998
Big Boi and Andre start their brilliant ascent into rap-bending madness.

375
PURPLE RAIN
PRINCE 1984
No gender play, no horndog humpery, just sweepingly regretful gospel-rock.

376
PORTIONS FOR FOXES
RILO KILEY 2004
In which singer Jenny Lewis becomes indie-rock's sexiest femme fatale.

377
BLACK HOLE SUN
SOUNDGARDEN 1994
The Seattle grunge faves' sweeping, grotesque masterpiece.

378
DEVIL'S RIGHT HAND
STEVE EARLE 1988
An upbeat anti-gun country anthem even Charlton Heston couldn't deny.

379
HERO TAKES A FALL
THE BANGLES 1984
Sunny harmonies and scuzzy riffs from chart-topping L.A. babes.

380
REBELLION (LIES)
THE ARCADE FIRE 2004
Ragtag Montreal kids fight for their right to stay up past bedtime.

381
PORTLAND, OREGON
LORETTA LYNN FEATURING JACK WHITE 2004
Ms. Loretta makes eyes at Mr. White across the bar. Creepily sexy.

382
LET'S GET SERIOUS
JERMAINE JACKSON 1980
A Stevie Wonder song so great, even *Andrew* Jackson could've made it a hit.

383
TORN
NATALIE IMBRUGLIA 1998
The Aussie soap beauty takes a break from TV and belts out a torrid breakup tale.

384
STRAIGHT OUTTA COMPTON
N.W.A 1988
Five Cali thugs do a drive-by on East Coast hip-hop.

385
MESSAGE OF LOVE
THE PRETENDERS 1981
Chrissie Hynde whips up a hard-earned paean to the big L.

386
TOTAL ECLIPSE OF THE HEART
BONNIE TYLER 1983
She needs you now tonight/ She freakin' needs you more than ever!

387
ARE YOU THAT SOMEBODY
AALIYAH 1998
Over a tiptoeing Timbaland beat, late R&B princess goes creeping.

388
WHEN I COME AROUND
GREEN DAY 1994
Proof punks can be sad without getting all whiny about it.

389
SHAKE YA ASS
MYSTIKAL 2000
N'awlins hip-hop's James Brown pairs with the Neptunes for some gluteus love.

390
NEVER SAY NEVER
ROMEO VOID 1982
Sax skronk + supercool, pudgy singer = new wave ridonculousness!

391
UNDERNEATH YOUR CLOTHES
SHAKIRA 2001
Official love song of the American Association of X-Ray Technicians.

392
INTERSTATE LOVE SONG
STONE TEMPLE PILOTS 1994
Beautiful slide guitar howls and lyrics about love and love for heroin.

393
JUMP
KRIS KROSS 1992
Irresistible jungle-gym rap that's so not wiggita-wiggita-wiggita wack.

394
CELEBRATED SUMMER
HÜSKER DÜ 1985
Earthshaking Minneapolis indie-punks rage against the school bell.

395
DOIN IT
LL COOL J 1995
In which LL sings the praises of vigorous exercise and "kitty cats."

396
TOUCH ME I'M SICK
MUDHONEY 1988
Guitar noise and exquisite self-loathing from Seattle grunge innovators.

397
SUMMER BABE (WINTER VERSION)
PAVEMENT 1992
Ramshackle and abstract, it's the ultimate slacker crush jam.

398
HARVEST MOON
NEIL YOUNG 1992
Some slow-stirred sweetness about love aging gracefully.

399
C'MON C'MON
VON BONDIES 2004
This breakup howl proves there's more to these guys than Jack White's fists.

400
I WANNA GO BACK
EDDIE MONEY 1986
Rocking the world, one dentist's-office waiting room at a time.

401
RAY OF LIGHT
MADONNA 1998
The material girl gets spiritual, and her temple is a rave party.

402
SOUTH BRONX
BOOGIE DOWN PRODUCTIONS 1987
A hip-hop history lesson that sparked one of rap's first beefs.

403
BACK IN BLACK
AC/DC 1980
Strippers and big-league sluggers agree: the world's greatest riff!

404
BAD BOYS
INNER CIRCLE 1987
Sticking it to felonious rednecks since 1988.

405
STUPID GIRL
GARBAGE 1995
Shirley Manson fumes while Butch Vig makes the guitars go whoosh.

406
LAST NIGHT A DJ SAVED MY LIFE
INDEEP 1983
Chill disco funk about the restorative powers of a crowded dance floor.

407
FREAK SCENE
DINOSAUR JR. 1988
Squally, poignant guitar pop from Massachusetts misfits.

408
TOM SAWYER
RUSH 1981
A rousing salute to independent spirits and drum fills longer than most songs.

409
REBEL WITHOUT A PAUSE
PUBLIC ENEMY 1988
Rap gets radical, thanks to booming orator Chuck D and a squealing beat.

410
ROUGH BOYS
PETE TOWNSHEND 1980
The Who genius extols sex and violence.

Ludacris: "Oral fixation? What oral fixation?"

HOFFS: LAURA LEVINE; LUDACRIS: SACHA WALDMAN/BGPHOTOS.COM

411
RIDE
THE VINES 2004
Roaring garage rawk from an autistic Aussie.

412
IF I WAS YOUR GIRLFRIEND
PRINCE 1987
Or, How to be a better lover through androgyny.

413
FALLIN'
ALICIA KEYS 2001
Jacks an old JB loop for a somber, heart-shredding ode to indecision.

414
FLAGPOLE SITTA
HARVEY DANGER 1997
Radio-friendly schizophrenia from Seattle one-hit wonders.

415
WATERFALLS
TLC 1994
An uptempo R&B morality tale teaches us: Practice safe sex and be nice to mama.

416
CHOP SUEY
SYSTEM OF A DOWN 2001
Operatic howls and haunted lyrics from nü-metal's smartest Armenians.

417
SITUATION
YAZ 1982
Like "Hit the Road Jack," but with synths and eyeliner.

418
RUMORS
TIMEX SOCIAL CLUB 1986
R&B popsters chuckle about the he-said, she-said.

419
I'M ON FIRE
BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN 1984
The Boss gets all R. Kelly, whispering come-ons to his "little girl."

420
SOUTHERN HOSPITALITY
LUDACRIS 2000
Over a dive-bombing Neptunes beat, Luda shows off some regional pride.

421
MURDER SHE WROTE
CHAKA DEMUS & PLIERS 1993
Rough-hewn reggae about that two-timing harlot Angela Lansbury.

422
SEX STYLE
KOOL KEITH 1996
Rap's weirdest genius invents "porno core," extols ... urine?

423
LAST GOODBYE
JEFF BUCKLEY 1994
Radiant, eerily prescient farewell from a died-too-young folk scion.

424
WE'RE DESPERATE
X 1981
L.A. punks' scraggly debut single about squatting and squalor.

425
I JUST WANNA LOVE U (GIVE IT TO ME)
JAY-Z 2000
Jigga and Pharrell hold forth on cash and cocksmithery.

426
WHERE IT'S AT
BECK 1996
L.A. hipster funk starring two turntables and a microphone.

427
THAT'S THE WAY LOVE GOES
JANET JACKSON 1993
Pop's little sister grows up with a hypnotic, sticky-hot seduction joint.

428
BAD REPUTATION
FREEDY JOHNSTON 1994
Near-perfect melodic gem from a NYC nice guy (no matter what the title says).

429
CRY ME A RIVER
JUSTIN TIMBERLAKE 2002
JT and Timbaland stick it to Britney with an operatic kiss-off.

430
CLOSING TIME
SEMISONIC 1998
Minneapolis alt-popsters offer up hummable barstool philosophy.

431
THERE IS A LIGHT THAT NEVER GOES OUT
THE SMITHS 1986
Morrissey has a wild night out, mopes about it.

432
THERE SHE GOES
THE LA'S 1991
A lovey-dovey Britpop ode ... to shootin' up horse!

433
CORNFLAKE GIRL
TORI AMOS 1994
New Age soul poet shouts out the Kellogg's roster.

434
WALKING ON THIN ICE
YOKO ONO 1980
Mrs. Lennon drops performance art shrieks for this DJ fave.

435
LET ME GO
HEAVEN 17 1983
Chilly, vaguely menacing New Wave with wobbly synths and wobblier sexuality.

436
GRINDIN'
CLIPSE 2002
Neptunes protégés rhyme about 'caine over a beat like a tank factory.

437
RUNNING UP THAT HILL
KATE BUSH 1986
Morose synths, laconic wails and an irresistible dance pulse.

438
PRETEND WE'RE DEAD
L7 1992
Seattle's premier riot grrrls unleash a clattering battle cry.

439
FEEL SO GOOD
MA$E 1997
Pop-rap perfection from this Diddy-boosted Harlemite.

440
YOU GET WHAT YOU GIVE
NEW RADICALS 1998
Feel-good mall rock from a celebrity-dissing studio whiz.

441
DON'T YOU (FORGET ABOUT ME)
SIMPLE MINDS 1985
From Scotland, one helluva prom song.

442
SQUARE BIZ
TEENA MARIE 1981
Rick James–endorsed disco diva belts her way through a slap-bass funk orgy.

443
I STILL HAVEN'T FOUND WHAT I'M LOOKING FOR
U2 1987
Heart-wrenching, majestic rock for anyone who's ever misplaced his remote.

444
TELL ME WHY
WYNONNA JUDD 1993
Sorry, Wynonna, he's just not that into you.

445
REBEL GIRL
BIKINI KILL 1992
From snarky Riot Grrrl heroes, a bristling jam about sexual fempowerment.

446
JUST AN ILLUSION
IMAGINATION 1982
Gauzy disco-soul, courtesy of three Brits who dressed like gay centurions.

Heaven 17: "Aw, mom, do we have to go to church?"

447
DO YOU REALIZE??
FLAMING LIPS 2002
Oklahoma weirdos get majestic. What floating in space must feel like.

448
PLAYER'S ANTHEM
JUNIOR M.A.F.I.A. 1995
A Biggie song in all but name, about grabbing genitals in the name of rap.

449
STEAL MY SUNSHINE
LEN 1999
SPF-defying hip-pop from Canada's funnest MCs. Take that, Snow!

450
SMOOTH
SANTANA FEATURING ROB THOMAS 1999
A sublimely cheesy cha-cha, still good eleventy billion listens later.

451
COUNTRY GRAMMAR (HOT SHIT)
NELLY
2000
Cornell Haynes' debut single and one killer jumprope chant.

452
ALL THE THINGS SHE SAID
t.A.T.u. 2002
Like when Marissa kissed Alex—only in Russian!

453
DON'T WANNA KNOW WHY
WHISKEYTOWN 2001
From Ryan Adams, pretty alt-rock about being a heartless bastard.

454
UNTITLED (HOW DOES IT FEEL)
D'ANGELO 2000
Mercury-busting slow jam from the fittest abs in R&B

455
LOVER I DON'T HAVE TO LOVE
BRIGHT EYES 2002
Conor Oberst's spookily symphonic tale of a hook-up gone bad.

456
TOO DRUNK TO FUCK
THE DEAD KENNEDYS
1987
Gleeful gross-out from Hyannis Port's least favorite Frisco punks.

457
RIGHT HERE
GO-BETWEENS 1987
Aussie pop so lovely even "you're 32 but you look 55" sounds romantic.

458
COME OUT AND PLAY
OFFSPRING 1994
One of pop-punk's most nagging riffs coupled with one wussy anti-gun theme.

HEAVEN 17: PA/LFI

No Doubt prepare to tackle intraband body-image issues.

459
DON'T KNOW WHY
NORAH JONES 2002
Care for some delicately forlorn crooning with your mimosa?

460
P.S.K. WHAT DOES IT MEAN?
SCHOOLLY D 1986
Proto-gangsta missive featuring one thumpalicious beat.

461
HAIL MARY
MAKAVELI (AKA TUPAC) 1996
An ominous church-bell beat and murderous threats from beyond the grave

462
JUDY AND THE DREAM OF HORSES
BELLE AND SEBASTIAN 1996
Scottish popsters' brassy, strummy ode to a bookish lass.

463
HATE IT OR LOVE IT
THE GAME 2005
A beat from Kanye, a hook from 50—how could he go wrong?

464
TRAPPED IN THE CLOSET
R. KELLY 2005
Five times the intrigue! Five times the sex! Five times the gay clergy!

465
LET THE MUSIC PLAY
SHANNON 1984
About drowning your sorrow in hot electro beats (and coke, probably).

466
BABY GOT BACK
SIR MIX-A-LOT 1992
Seattle's favorite portly pimp puts the "ass" in bass.

467
BRICK
BEN FOLDS FIVE 1997
Haunting piano ballad about abortion and (all) its victims.

468
PAPA DON'T PREACH
MADONNA 1986
Like Roe v. Wade—but with a killer dance beat!

469
RADIATION VIBE
FOUNTAINS OF WAYNE 1996
Thermonuclearly sunny singalong from NYC hookmeisters' early days.

470
THEY REMINISCE OVER YOU (T.R.O.Y.)
PETE ROCK AND C.L. SMOOTH 1992
Gorgeously meditative hip-hop from grieving beat-nuts.

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HUNGER STRIKE
TEMPLE OF THE DOG 1990
Chris Cornell and Eddie Vedder wail beautifully at the mon-eyed classes.

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SMALL STAKES
SPOON 2002
Austin indie-rock lifers deliver a tart slap to ... other indie lifers.

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AUTUMN SWEATER
YO LA TENGO 1997
From New Jersey, organ-driven indie pop about social anxiety and romance.

474
GIGANTIC
PIXIES 1988
The ultimate wedding song for people who hate wedding songs.

475
I ALONE
LIVE 1994
Great, blustery, mystical grunge from a truly horrible band.

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WU-TANG CLAN 1993
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478
PUT YOUR HANDS WHERE MY EYES COULD SEE
BUSTA RHYMES 1997
Grammatically inventive bounce from Brooklyn Wildman.

479
SANTA MONICA
EVERCLEAR 1995
Terrific SoCal bubblegrunge they never came close to matching.

480
GUILTY CONSCIENCE
EMINEM 1999
Em's the devil, Dre's the angel—guess who wins?

481
LAKE OF FIRE
MEAT PUPPETS 1983
Arizonans serve up warped limericks about hell.

482
MAN ON THE MOON
R.E.M. 1992
A twangy, beguiling tribute to comedian Andy Kaufman.

483
PASSING ME BY
PHARCYDE 1992
Bay Area alt-rap standard about pimping exactly zero girls.

484
I WANNA BE ADORED
STONE ROSES 1989
Spacious Britpop gem about the devil and low self-esteem.

485
WE ARE ALL ON DRUGS
WEEZER 2005
Weezer inadvertently write the *Being Bobby Brown* theme.

486
CAN'T STAND IT
WILCO 1999
Americana deconstructionists make despair sound pleasant.

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REGULATE
WARREN G 1994
Dr. Dre's cuz and Nate Dogg make gangbanging go down smooove.

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BUJU BANTON 1995
Jamaican giant loses a friend, finds God and soothes a nation.

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DA' BUTT
E.U. 1988
Slinky D.C. go-go recalls the badonkadonk-ing good ol' days.

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SoCal punks get misty-eyed about a hugely tiny career.

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Britpop smarties' infectious tale of slumming rich girls.

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HERE COMES THE HOTSTEPPER
INI KAMOZE 1995
Jamaica's lyrical gangster toasts himself.

493
BORN SLIPPY (NUXX)
UNDERWORLD 1996
Techno trio evokes a hot house party and the morning after.

494
I'LL BE YOU
REPLACEMENTS 1989
The band's lone Top 200 hit, about "a rebel without a clue."

495
DON'T SPEAK
NO DOUBT 1995
Gwennie leaps from ska-punk brat to pop-ballad princess.

496
1979
THE SMASHING PUMPKINS 1995
Soaring suburban nostalgia for jaded Gen-X'ers.

497
I BELIEVE IN A THING CALLED LOVE
THE DARKNESS 2003
Amp-exploding rawk from a Queen fan whose catsuit is a size too small.

498
SOMEBODY'S BABY
JACKSON BROWNE 1982
Hella-smooth El Lay pop, and a great film-music moment.

499
I DON'T WANT TO MISS A THING
AEROSMITH 1998
An epic love ballad to destroy giant asteroids to.

500
YELLOW
COLDPLAY 1999
Hey, Chris Martin: Bono called—he wants his awesomeness back!

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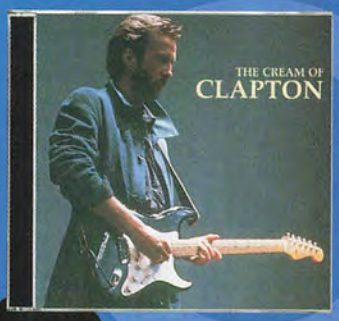

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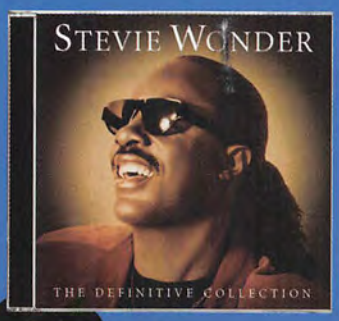

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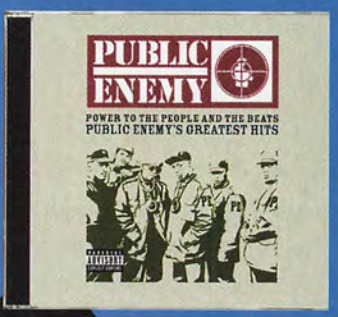

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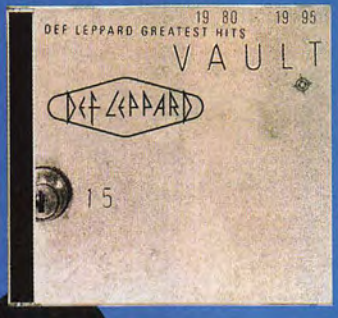

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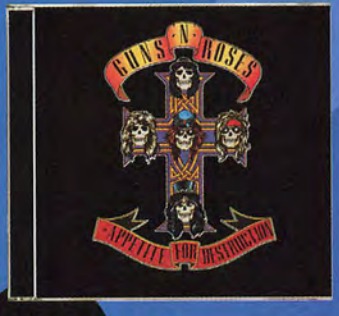

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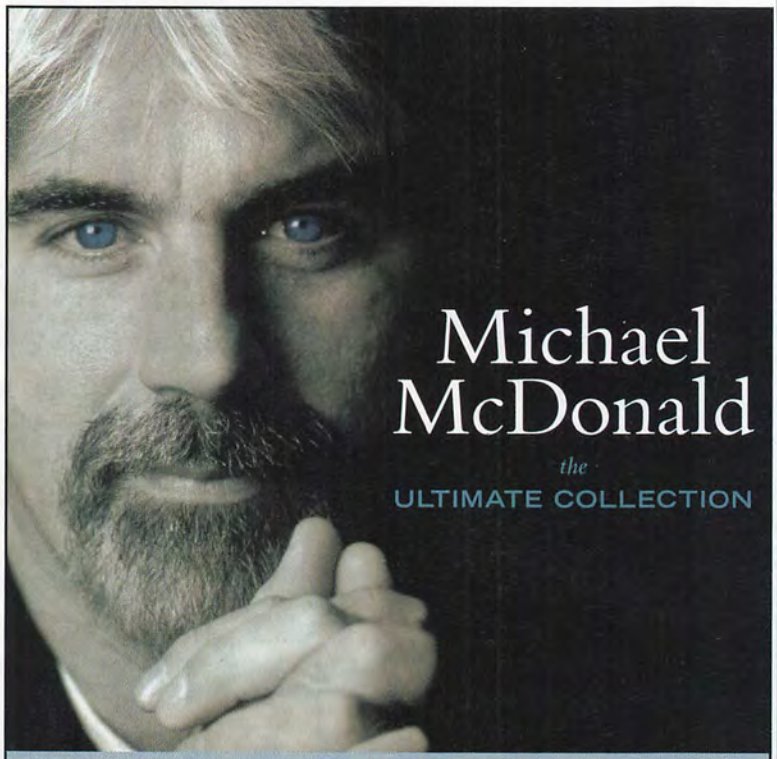

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DEATH CAB FOR CUTIE
Do these eternal indie-rock strivers have what it takes to break big?
✪✪✪

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FRANZ FERDINAND
The Scot fashionistos are back with more disco-punk! More tight trousers! More homoeroticism!
✪✪✪✪

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The only country starlet who could whup Shania, Faith—and Toby—at arm-wrestling. Album two, reviewed.
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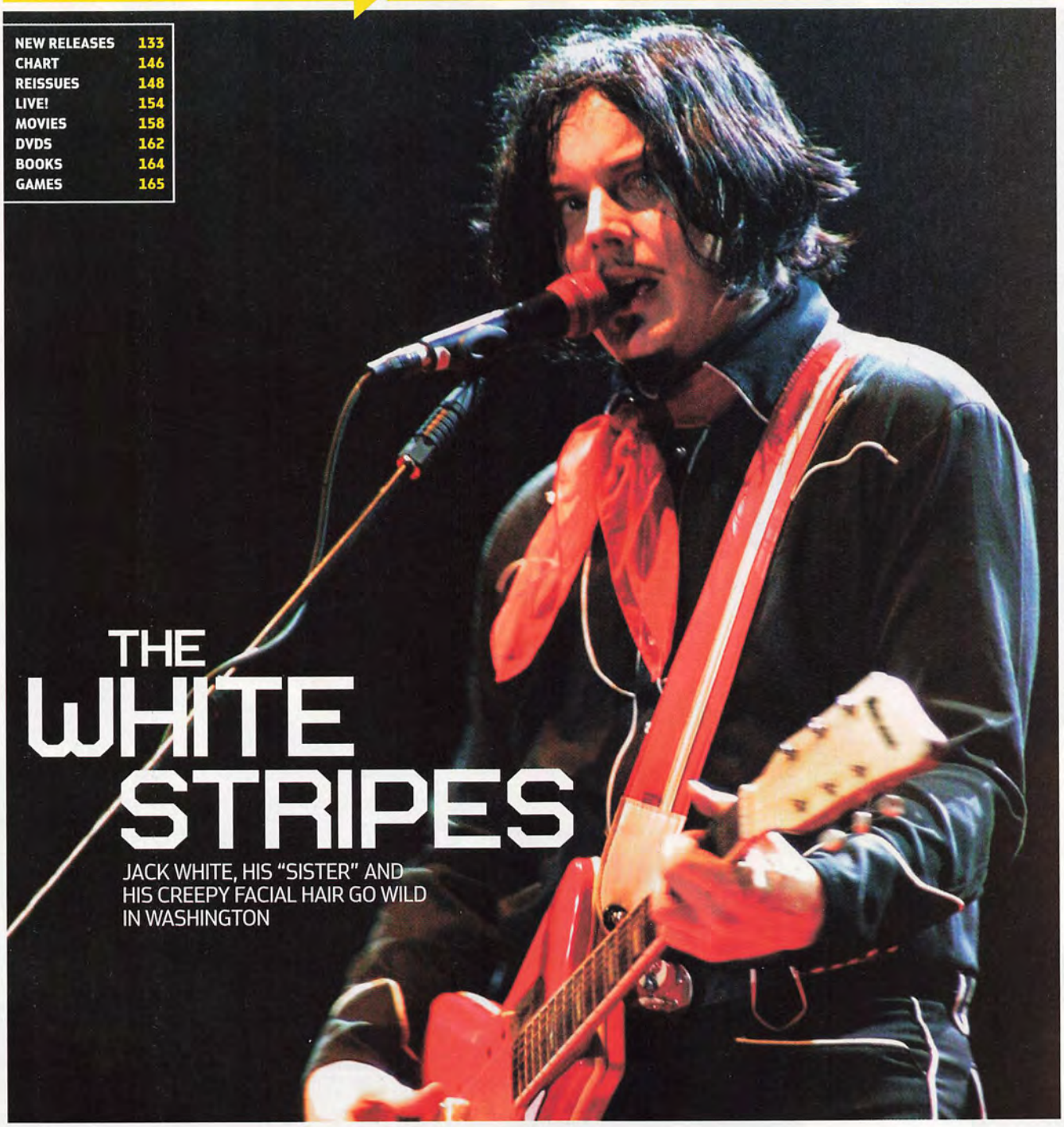

THE WHITE STRIPES

JACK WHITE, HIS "SISTER" AND HIS CREEPY FACIAL HAIR GO WILD IN WASHINGTON

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Death Cab for Cutie (left to right): Chris Walla, Jason McGerr, Ben Gibbard and Nick Harmer.

BIG PLANS

THE BIGGEST BAND IN SORROWVILLE, USA, AIM TO BREAK INTO THE BIG TIME. MEET THE NEW KINGS OF THE NERDS

DEATH CAB FOR CUTIE

PLANS

★★★

ATLANTIC

DRIVE INTO THE center of Seattle after the corporate rush has filled the skyscrapers and before the bohemians crawl down for happy hour, and you can feel the atmosphere that yielded Death Cab for Cutie. Buildings of reflective glass sit silent in the cool weather. The grime of history, so evident in older cities, has left no mark. This is a Northwest ruled not by fishermen but by software designers housed in cookie-cutter condos before moving on to Vancouver or Hong Kong. It's a city of rising prices, drive-through espresso, 35-year-old millionaires; it belongs to whoever writes the next killer app.

Death Cab for Cutie are the artistic signal-bearers for this new Seattle. The old Northwest was proudly provincial, with rock stars in logger flannel making dirty garage noise that suited their libertarian, working-class spirit. But within the Microsoft-Amazon-Nike nexus of corporate America, a web-centric cosmopolitanism is the new pioneer spirit. And Death Cab, a tech-savvy band making brainy mood music that seems to erase every source it borrows from, is the biggest Seattle pop phenom since the local boys started cutting their hair again.

Death Cab are not even a rock band, really. Their gravity-fighting sound is more like electronica played on guitars and drums, built around the voice of Brian Wilson's long-lost nephew. White as can be, focused on tune and texture rather than any kind of funkiness, Death Cab create fantasies for office cubicle workers—little arcs of transcendence made poignant by a mood of limitation. The group's main gambit (which made its last release, *Transatlanticism*, the makeout record for a nation of *O.C.* fans) is a slow build of careful dynamic shifts—a nimble bassline nudging gentle keyboards, the shimmer of Chris Walla's guitar cocooning Ben Gibbard's purr—coalescing to produce a euphoric climax. It's like a very peaceful version of sex. Death Cab songs temper romanticism with careful, almost self-effacing, detail. This is hi-fi music with a lo-fi soul, managing to be smart, self-conscious and refined without being pretentious.

DEATH CAB CREATE FANTASIES FOR OFFICE CUBICLE WORKERS.

"Sorrow drips into your heart though a pinhole," Gibbard sings on "Marching Bands of Manhattan," the opening track on the band's major-label debut. This is his specialty, the grand pronouncement made manageable. It's a modest gift, like his voice, one of indie's most beloved—a reedy tenor that would be pure Kermit the Frog if not for the breathy undertones that make girls and boys alike believe he knows their secrets. *Plans* offers Gibbard at his sweetest, in love and hit-hopeful, with songs like "Soul Meets Body" and "I Will Follow You Into the Dark" (a bid to usurp Green Day's "Time of Your Life" as a generation's weepy ballad) building on the wistfulness of his 2003 side project, the Postal Service. At times, the writing feels almost too weightless. But repeat listening makes these songs reliably addictive, on a par with other clear inspirations like R.E.M. and Radiohead.

Credit Chris Walla for that. He's the band's Peter Buck, its Jonny Greenwood, the master builder of sonic space, creating the moods Gibbard articulates. Walla's Death Cab is not an emo band but an Eno band—the studio-as-instrument idea, which Brian Eno explored as David Bowie's partner and U2's producer, is Walla's template. Anal as all get-out, Walla modulates each element and emphasizes the right ones, from Jason McGerr's itchy rhythms on the hapless kiss-off "Crooked Teeth" to the echoing piano riff in the emergency-room chronicle "What Sarah Said," a throwaway sound that says more than Gibbard's lyrics about the strange inertia of watching a loved one die. As the producer for other new Northwest aesthetes like the Decemberists and the Long Winters, Walla is a major force in promoting nerdy craftsmanship as the new punk. In his own band, he's the one steering from cult status to prime time.

Plans makes this journey, but pensively. Death Cab even redo 2002's stretchy guitar epic "Stability" as a dark little good-bye to its indie past. But in the new Northwest, people don't worry about their history; they just keep moving on in a vague but beautiful present tense. At least that's how it seems, cruising through Seattle with Death Cab for Cutie on the stereo.

ANN POWERS

DOWNLOAD "Marching Bands of Manhattan," "Your Heart is an Empty Room," "What Sarah Said"

AUTUMN DE WILDE

THE SCORE

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✪✪ MEDIOCRE

✪ FOUL

DEVENDRA BANHART

CRIPPLE CROW ✪✪✪

XL RECORDINGS

The young patriarch of "freak folk" lets his whimsy run wild

With the voice of a goat god and the looks of a pre-Islamic Cat Stevens, Devendra Banhart is the piper leading today's baby hippies into Eden. His fourth album shows he's still working out his role. Though long, it's strong: Full-band arrangements add muscle, and Banhart's impulses cohere—he's anti-war, pro-pansexuality, impish and emotionally *au naturel*. The songs in Spanish, Banhart's first language, flow gorgeously, and his humor is refreshingly unhip. Yet the substance sometimes disturbs. His obsession with children (including the hard-to-judge love song "Little Boys") could someday turn creepy. And his vocal inflections suggest a minstrelsy that's more blackface than medieval. *Cripple Crow* shows Banhart in his uncensored prime, and it's thrilling. But this free spirit may need to learn some limits.

ANN POWERS

DOWNLOAD: "Long Haired Child," "Hey Mama Wolf"

BIG STAR

IN SPACE ✪✪

RYKODISC

Ignored fallen genius reunites his worshipped band for a full album of disappointment

Big Star was the ultimate great band that only a devoted sect knew about, a beloved underground act that influenced R.E.M., the New Pornographers and nearly every guitar group today that favors hooks and moody glares over noise. The Memphis rockers, fronted by singer Alex Chilton, built a style out of radiant harmonies and heartsick true-believer lyrics. Not that *In Space* even tries to live up to any of that. It sounds as bitter and cynical as most of Chilton's solo stuff since Big Star originally imploded in 1978. Reuniting with original drummer Jody Stephens along with Jon Auer and Ken Stringfellow from the Posies, another band that wouldn't exist without Big Star, Chilton wrote this album in the studio. If they tour, holler for the old stuff.

RJ SMITH

DOWNLOAD: "Lady Sweet"

Devendra Banhart as "Hindu Jesus."

BLACKALICIOUS

THE CRAFT ✪✪✪

ANTI-

For their fifth full-length, brainy Oakland hip-hop duo enlist some high-profile guest stars: George Clinton … and God!

"God writes these rhymes, I just listen to him," proclaims rapper Gift of Gab on *The Craft*'s first track, "The World of Vibration." Turns out God's a typical hip-hop wonk then, full of clever wordplay one moment, kind of pretentious the next. Still, He's got some able collaborators. Producer Chief Xcel shows his range early on, employing chipper Who-like synths and fuzzy guitars on the rockish "Powers," then detouring into P-Funk territory on "Lotus Flower," a pleasantly intoxicated collaboration with George Clinton. And while Gab tends toward preachiness, on tracks like "My Pad and Pen" he dispenses an endless chain of syllables so relentlessly you can almost hear the

BANHART: AUTUMN DE WILDE; COHEED: JAMES MINCHIN III

THE FELLOWSHIP

Dungeons & Dragons fans are wizards of the new-new metal

COHEED AND CAMBRIA

GOOD APOLLO, I'M BURNING STAR IV: VOLUME 1. ✪✪✪✪

COLUMBIA

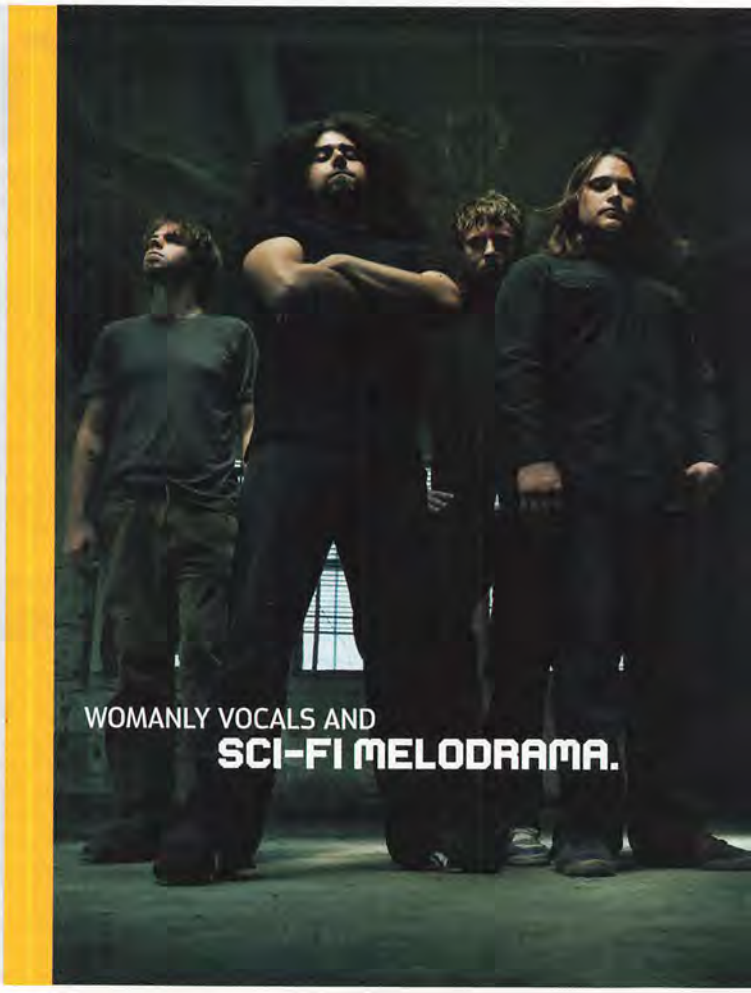
FIRST THE NERDS had revenge. Now they're consolidating power. Fantastic-four geek boys from upstate New York, Coheed and Cambria aren't yet mainstream—their mind-warpingly great 2003 disc merely went gold—but their giddy revival of fantasy rock (thought to have died with John Bonham) joins a kindred cultural landscape of *The Lord of the Rings* and *World of Warcraft*. Which might explain why a band borrowing the womanly vocals and absurdly intricate structures of onetime laughingstocks Styx and Rush now seem poised, like fellow proggers the Mars Volta, to redefine metal.

This dense, inventive disc is one chapter in a grand sci-fi melodrama about a rebel orphan fighting apocalyptic forces. Strangely, the deeply obscure lyrics—by singer-guitarist Claudio Sanchez, who also releases comic books, plans a movie and apparently does not leave his room—impart none of this. (There are only hints: Lone velvety ballad "Wake Up" sweetly promises "I'll do anything for you/Kill anyone for you.") So here's the real story: An ambitious band get to balance their charismatic music with a biblically epic tale encompassing all human (and some extraterrestrial) experience.

Belting high as the ether, Sanchez summons the ominous and savage as easily as the tender and abandoned. With thunderclap chords (the ultra-heavy "Welcome Home") and trampoline-launch choruses ("Hey! Hey!"-accented "The Suffering"), his daydreams achieve the CGI appeal of a convention-inspiring action blockbuster. It helps that the second half unspools epic jams, from the part Phish, part Scandinavian metal "Fear Through the Eyes of Madness" to the bluesy psychedelic saga "The Final Cut." Forget the story; the fantasy is in the music.

NICK CATUCCI

DOWNLOAD: "Fear Through the Eyes of Madness," "Welcome Home"



drum machines gasping for air as they struggle to keep pace.

G. BEATO

DOWNLOAD: "My Pad and Pen," "Lotus Flow"

JAMES BLUNT

BACK TO BEDLAM ✪✪✪

ATLANTIC

Former army captain swaps combat for comfort rock

To a country as class-fixated as England, the million-selling rise of James Blunt has been catnip. The 28-year-old singer-songwriter is a boarding school–educated former officer in the Household Cavalry, whose military duties included guarding the Queen Mother's coffin. He's a sleeper success with some heavyweight backing: discovered by smash producer Linda Perry, endorsed by Elton John and produced by Tom Rothrock (Beck, Elliott Smith). Recalling everyone from Damien Rice to Coldplay, Blunt's bittersweet balladry is a well-ploughed furrow lent distinction by his arrestingly androgynous voice and flinty lyrics: "Wisemen" features "pernickety little bastards," while "No Bravery" was inspired by his experiences fighting in Kosovo. And in the irresistible, self-descriptive "You're Beautiful," he has a signature tune strong enough to hang a Hugh Grant romantic comedy on.

DORIAN LYNSKEY

DOWNLOAD: "You're Beautiful," "Wisemen"

BLACKALICIOUS: B-PLUS

Blackalicious, also known as Baldalicious.

BON JOVI

HAVE A NICE DAY ✪✪

ISLAND

Bush-hating singer/actor studies bumper stickers, writes earnest CD

While his hair-metal contemporaries are working the nostalgia circuit—or worse, Circuit City—Jon Bon Jovi is in his third decade of pumping out arena rock to actual arenas. Album nine does little to dispel his rep for having fists of ham—Oliver Stone to Springsteen's Martin Scorsese—offering trite, quasi-political slogans where catchy choruses used to be. The anti-Bush title track is a retread of 2000's "It's My Life," while "I Wanna Be Loved" brings Richie Sambora's "Livin' on a Prayer" vocoder out of mothballs. Familiarity may be the root of the band's appeal, but even their most bombastic we-will-survive anthems were topped with a caramel froth that's in short supply here. Things perk up with "Last Man Standing," which laments the shitty state of pop music—as though JBJ is part of the solution, not part of the problem.

STEVE KANDELL

DOWNLOAD: "Novocaine"

BROKEN SOCIAL SCENE

BROKEN SOCIAL SCENE ✪✪✪✪

ARTS & CRAFTS

Canadian indie-rock orchestra goes way, way over the top

The Toronto-based legion Broken Social Scene has no idea when to say *when*. They encompass roughly 15 members these days, many of whom overlap with other Canadian indie bands too large to easily fit onstage, and their third album is so densely layered with instruments that its lyrics are crushed into an incomprehensible blur. By the time they get to the climax of the closing 10-minute explosion "It's All Gonna Break," they've airlifted in the string section, the horn brigade and the "Bolero" rhythm. But their excess comes off as generosity—the album's plush and detailed enough to invite extensive exploration, and varied enough to not get exhausting. Neatest surprise: the Princely groove of "Hotel," with at least three singers contributing muffled whispers whose erotic charge is clear even if their content isn't.

DOUGLAS WOLK

DOWNLOAD: "7/4 (Shoreline)," "Hotel"

Why, yes, Sheryl, we *will* buy a yellow wristband.

TOUR DE CROW

Rock's queen racer cruises on a love vibe

SHERYL CROW

WILDFLOWER ✪✪✪

A&M RECORDS

IT'S HARDLY NEWS when a diva falls for a sports hero; just check all the R&B stars sporting rocks from their jersey-wearing Johnnies. But Sheryl Crow scaled mountains alongside boyfriend Lance Armstrong in prep for his Tour de France victory. This sweaty fact intrigues less as a window into their romance—leave that to this, her "Lance record"—than as an image of Crow as one of pop's great competitors.

HERE, CROW OPENS HER HEART.

As serious and detail-oriented as an athlete, she's been branded a sweet but chilly Popsicle. Here, Crow opens her heart. *Wildflower* is assiduously intimate: lushly orchestrated, strictly mid-tempo and abundant with musings about balancing freedom and love.

Disclosures come not only within besotted ballads like "I Know Why" ("Where you are is where I wanna go," murmurs the Team Discovery camp follower) but also through a general aura of contented self-reflection. The woman whose muse was once misery lectures her exes on "Good Is Good" and drops New Age knowledge on "Chances Are." She's found peace with the hardest-training athlete in sports—no wonder she's still on point.

The Sheryl shrug—the casual cool that made her a star—reappears in the sexy "Lifetimes." These songs are simple but contain countless little tributes and twists. The Eagles chords and Aerosmith nods are as elemental as her joints and tendons. Her lyrics abound with well-worn phrases, but her voice makes familiarity feel personal, reminding us that folks often think in a quirky mix of allusions and clichés.

Wildflower feels like a day off, as Crow considers her next decade. But there's an art to resting—just ask the guy who's about to take a very public break by Crow's side. This quiet disc may signal Crow's commitment to putting Lance and life before rock & roll; yet it's her drive, this time to prove her maturity and warmth, that leaves the biggest impression.

ANN POWERS

DOWNLOAD: "I Know Why," "Wildflower"

SHERYL CROW'S CURRENT LISTENING

KT TUNSTALL EYE TO THE TELESCOPE *RELENTLESS/VIRGIN*

RAY LA MONTAGNE TROUBLE *RCA*

RYAN CABRERA

YOU STAND WATCHING ✪✪

E.V.L.A./ATLANTIC

On his second album, self-proclaimed teen-pop "wuss" pledges undying devotion to crushes, pomade

Ryan Cabrera might have the most paradoxical hair in music. The *J-14* heartthrob's 'do is what you notice first about him: a spiky, six-inch monument to product that announces Cabrera as a teen-pop bad boy, the Sid to onetime girlfriend Ashlee Simpson's Nancy, a Rebel with Frosted Tips. But in his acoustic-guitar-driven pop songs he's passionately harmless, nice to the point of self-effacement. His favorite (well, only) topics, covered with breathless yearning, are relationships that don't quite exist, either because his love is unrequited or because he thinks the girl can do better—as on "Find Your Way," where he encourages a girl who's broken his heart to live her own life. He subtly tweaks this, though, on the single "Shine On," encouraging a girl *he* seems to be dumping to live her own life: "I know you'll be better off without me when I'm gone." Well, ladies, you can't say the hair didn't warn you about him.

JONAH WEINER

DOWNLOAD: "Shine On"

TRACY CHAPMAN

WHERE YOU LIVE ✪✪✪

ELEKTRA

Stripped-down approach leads to songwriter's best album in ages

Tracy Chapman's voice has always been her best asset. Its sad-oboe tone and trembling vibrato bring a tart vulnerability to her music, ensuring that her acoustic ballads seem more attached to real life than to folk-fest songwriting convention. And the small-scale sound of her seventh album focuses squarely on that voice. The arrangements are lean but wonderfully evocative, using the ghostly reverb of Joe Gore's guitar to articulate the deep sense of loss beneath "Don't Dwell," while Chapman's lyrics remain memorable and affecting, with "3,000 Miles" portraying underclass desolation as vividly as anything she's done since "Fast Car," her 1988 bust-out hit. The blend of sound and sentiment is a powerful combination, and speaks to the strengths that made her matter in the first place.

J.D. CONSIDINE

DOWNLOAD: "3,000 Miles," "Change," "America"

I LOVE THIS CD!

ANDRE BENJAMIN
ACTOR, *BE COOL, FOUR BROTHERS*

JOHN COLTRANE
MY FAVORITE THINGS *(ATLANTIC)*

"What's great about Coltrane is that he has perfect form, but at the same time a sense of freedom. That's so rare."

CLAP YOUR HANDS SAY YEAH

CLAP YOUR HANDS SAY YEAH ✪✪✪✪

SELF RELEASED

Your MP3-blogging friend's new favorite band

Call it the Pitchfork Effect: A young, unsigned band earns raves on a couple of music-geek websites, and before you can say "Arcade Fire" they're playing sold-out shows with David Bowie in the crowd. This year's beneficiaries are Clap Your Hands Say Yeah, an exuberant Brooklyn five-some whose debut is perfect end-of-summer indie pop: jangly guitars and a rhythm section that knows everything sounds better when you're nodding your head. Alec Ounsworth's cracked, high-pitched yelp—somewhere between David Byrne and Eric Cartman—makes his tales of down-and-out youth tough to decipher, but that's all secondary: *Clap Your Hands Say Yeah* is a giddy funhouse of a record, where the cure for everything from a broken heart to an empty wallet is to crank up the volume and do just what the title says.

JOSH EELLS

DOWNLOAD: "Let the Cool Goddess Rust Away," "The Skin of My Yellow Country Teeth," "Upon This Tidal Wave of Young Blood"

DANDY WARHOLS

ODDITORIUM, OR WARLORDS OF MARS ✪✪✪

CAPITOL

Pretty, witty alt-rockers' latest career move: not selling out

In the recent documentary *Dig!*, Dandy Warhols frontman Courtney Taylor played second banana to the Brian Jonestown Massacre's Anton Newcombe. The savvier industry player, Taylor nonetheless regarded his self-destructive friend-turned-nemesis with awe and envy, a nutjob epitome of indie cred and artistic genius. Looks as if Newcombe's mystique still exerts a hold on these Oregon neo-glam rockers. An abrupt U-turn after 2003's beautifully blank new wave sell-out *Welcome to the Monkey House*, the Dandys' fifth album opts for Newcombe-style psychedelic wankery. The toked-up "Smoke It" is the closest these masters of the novelty hit get to sardonic frivolity. Elsewhere, *Odditorium* buries its subtle hooks deep

CROW: SHERYL NIELDS; ANDRE: SCOTT KIRKLAND/FILMMAGIC.COM

The Dandy Warhols' hotel afterparty could use some work.

within endless, shape-shifting jams. There's a basic flaw in Taylor's grand plan: Ambition is the last thing you expect—or want—from a bunch of professional poseurs.

DENNIS LIM

DOWNLOAD: "Smoke It," "Down Like Disco"

THE DETROIT COBRAS

BABY ✪✪✪

BLOODSHOT

Garage-rocking Michigan gal reanimates forgotten R&B relics

While her Motor City neighbor Jack White honors his blues forefathers by channeling their messy vitality in his songwriting, Rachel Nagy prefers pledging allegiance through some spirited karaoke. On her quintet's third album of little-known soul covers, obscure Isaac Hayes and Bobby Womack oldies get baptized in bar-band sweat and pool-hall swagger that'll put a smile on even the most miserable drunk in the joint. Like any good blues interpreter, Nagy never lets her sexy growl overshadow the material—on Allen Toussaint's "It's Raining," her subdued vocals complement the New Orleans ballad's loneliness sigh for sigh. *Baby*'s only original composition, "Hot Dog (Watch Me Eat)," demonstrates she's no writer, but her skill at finding buried R&B treasure is talent enough.

TIM GRIERSON

DOWNLOAD: "Mean Man," "It's Raining"

DISTURBED

TEN THOUSAND FISTS ✪✪✪

REPRISE

Platinum-plated group that wants to be "the metal U2"

David Draiman, Disturbed's ultra-serious frontman, is no metal God. He's more like a monk, solemnly governed by the hard, fast and accessible school of songwriting established by Motörhead and Dio. That faith, coupled with his distinctive rapid-fire delivery, a sort of stuttering rap that complements the syncopated riffs, has sold millions of records. Here, Draiman methodically attempts to differentiate each of these songs—whose unrelenting wallop, growling guitars and mock-operatic choruses tend to blur together even as they're kicking your ass—by earnestly, if bitterly, addressing topics like class ("Son of a Plunder," featuring sexually charged barks and heavy breathing), politics ("Avarice") and the power of metal ("I'm Alive"). Despite the devil horns Draiman raises, this music manifests the worshipful ritual of prayer.

NICK CATUCCI

DOWNLOAD: "Ten Thousand Fists," "Just Stop"

EBONY EYEZ

7 DAY CYCLE ✪✪✪

CAPITOL

Femcee demands cunnilingus, has more sex in a week than Colin Farrell has had this millennium!

When Ebony Eyez teases, "Say hello to my little friend," she's not talking firearms: She's introducing you to her vibrator. It's the kind of piss-taking emasculation that defines the rookie's Trackboyz-helmed, week-in-the-life debut album. And what a week it was: She bullies her way into receiving rather than giving over the jet-exhaust synths and caveman stomp of "In Ya Face," while "Act Like a Bitch" would make Too Short double-take. She finally tastes love on the flitting "Hot Chick," only to toss her beau to the wayside on the woman-powered "Take Me Back." Despite Ebony's raunchy sass, though, her one-track mind gets tiresome, making this album about a week feel nearly as long as one.

HUA HSU

DOWNLOAD: "In Ya Face," "Heart of a Soldier"

WARHOLS: RAY GORDON

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Paul McCartney: We told you to go before you left the house!

Faith Hill makes eyes at one handsome caption.

JASON FORREST

SHAMELESSLY EXCITING ✪✪✪

SONIG

Laptop beatmaster looks like CompUSA clerk, rocks like David Lee Roth

DJ WITH OCD

There's trainspotting, and then there's getting hit by a train. Jason Forrest, who constructs brawny "cock-rock disco" by ramming together millisecond samples, makes music that's a little bit of both: It's like a game of *Name That Tune* at a barreling 200 bpm. Is that a Joan Jett riff in "Dust Never Settles"? Which Ramones song does that "Hey!" come from on "My 36 Favorite Punk Songs"? Forrest likes to leave listeners hovering at the edge of recognition, making for an ecstatically unstable dance party. His jam-packed compositions can get claustrophobic, but "Nightclothes and Headphones" offers some breathing room. Over a dreamy, downtempo beat, indie thrush Laura Cantrell coos about listening to the radio in the dead of night: It's a perfect respite before the amps fire back up.

JONAH WEINER

DOWNLOAD: "The Walls of the City Shake," "My 36 Favorite Punk Songs"

FAITH HILL

FIREFLIES ✪✪✪

WARNER BROS.

Country diva goes back to downhome; city-slickness still sticks, though

Faith Hill saw a drop in sales and some country-fan backlash for her glossy, frequently gorgeous 2002 crossover album, *Cry*. Now she's doing the musical version of running scared, twanging up her voice and using "Mississippi Girl," co-written by John Rich of current credibility masters Big & Rich, to insist she "ain't big-headed." The fascinatingly shameless song taps into the essence of Hill's appeal: She's always sounded best when pleading—for the love of a man, or (now) her fans. Similarly, *Fireflies*' best songs are varied-tempo singalongs—this isn't hardcore but anthemic country. The girl can't help it: Hill's huge voice sounds comfy making sweet, sweeping, weepy amends.

KEN TUCKER

DOWNLOAD: "Mississippi Girl," "Fireflies," "The Lucky One"

HIM

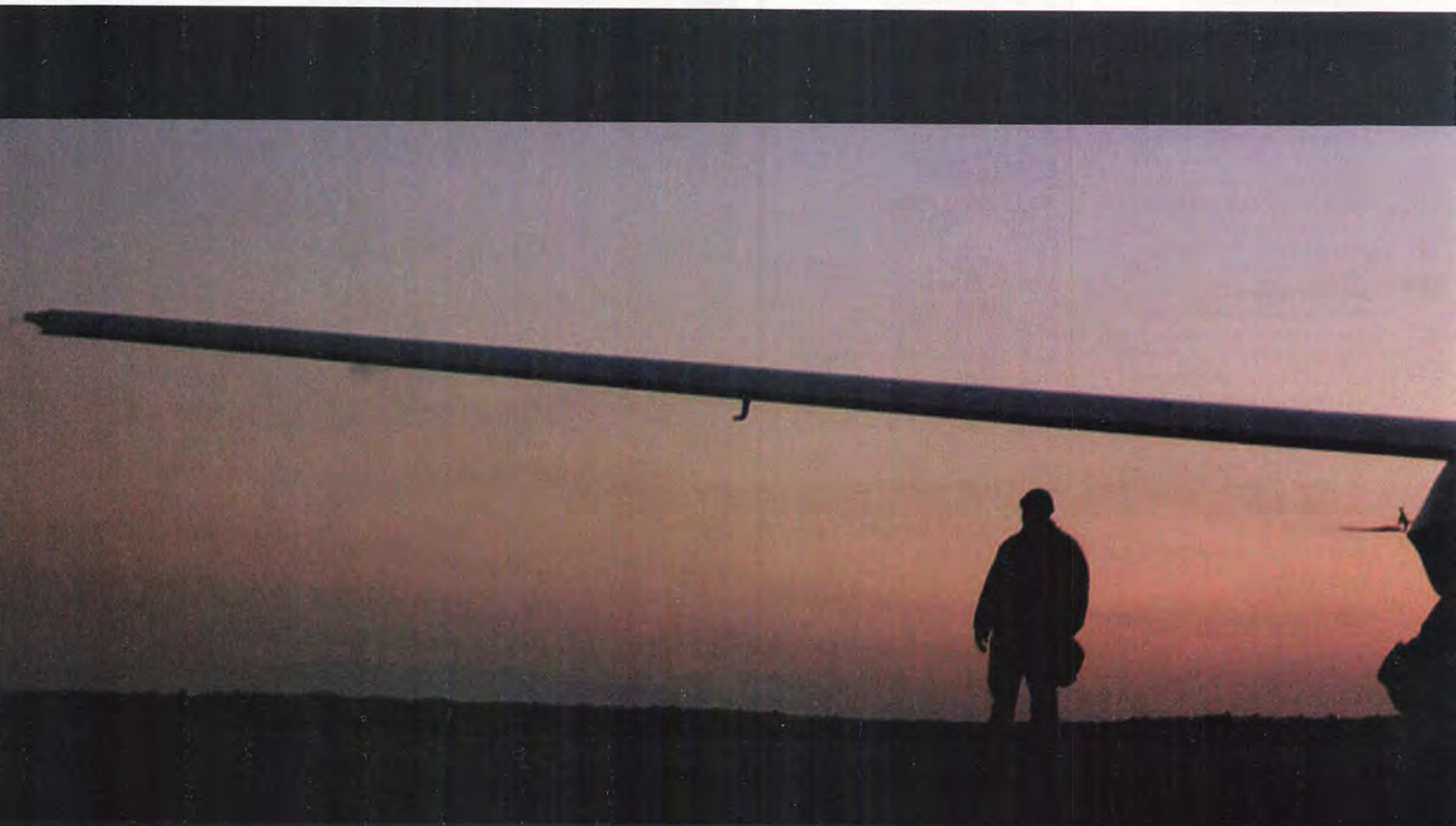
DARK LIGHT ✪✪✪

SIRE

Florid Finns give bad love a good name

This Finnish quintet (the name stands for His Infernal Majesty) is led by Ville Valo, a swaggering goth-rock heartthrob who aspires to make what he calls "love metal." On HIM's American studio debut, it's unclear how, beyond a couple of minor keys, love metal differs from the hair metal of the 1980s. This is a good thing: Heavy music can always use a singer like Valo—someone capable of carrying a tune, that is—and it's refreshing to hear a band approach the form's familiar imagery from a place of romance, not cynicism. Over guitarist Linde's ringing power

MCCARTNEY: RICHARD HAUGHTON; HILL: ANDREW MCPHERSON



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chords, Valo sounds genuinely regretful about having to "Rip Out the Wings of a Butterfly." Plus, drummer Gas clangs a ride cymbal as proudly as Tico Torres.

MIKAEL WOOD

DOWNLOAD: "Rip Out the Wings of a Butterfly," "Vampire Heart"

TEAIRRA MARÍ

ROC-A-FELLA RECORDS PRESENTS ... TEAIRRA MARÍ ✪✪✪

ROC-A-FELLA

Jay-Z's newly christened diva princess is still jailbait, but wow

"Don't let my cute face fool ya," growls Teairra Marí over the big foghorn crunk of "No Daddy." And don't let her sweet Aaliyah's-little-sister voice fool you either. A Detroit native, Jay-Z's newly crowned flava princess may be only 17, but she was "forced to survive on the streets," making it clear she can handle herself. In the addictively stark "Make Her Feel Good," over just a Clipse-y thud and a twinkly music-box theme, she demands with hear-her-roar assertiveness that any suitor meet her womanly needs. But, as though remembering that 17 is still young, a vulnerable Teairra confesses sexual fears and, in "Phone Booth," tearfully waits for a guy to pick her up after a bad fight with her mom. Tough or not, that's adorable.

BEN SISARIO

DOWNLOAD: "Make Her Feel Good," "Phone Booth"

PAUL MCCARTNEY

CHAOS AND CREATION IN THE BACK YARD ✪✪

CAPITOL

Ex-Beatle's long-rumored modern rock album ain't hardly

Paul McCartney's collaboration with Radiohead producer Nigel Godrich aroused hopes and fears better expended on the fate of social security, or Pamela Anderson's love life. McCartney's first studio album since 2001—not so long in an artist of his accrued wealth and advanced years—most resembles his eponymous 1970 debut. Like that breakaway, it's slight and spare and fundamentally honest, with McCartney playing most of the instruments. But between his improved chops, the latest synthesizer technology and Godrich whispering in his ear, it's rather straight where the debut was eccentric and charming. As the proudly "twee" "English ➔

THE CD WE'RE TOTALLY GAY FOR!

THE MAGIC NUMBERS

THE MAGIC NUMBERS ✪✪✪✪

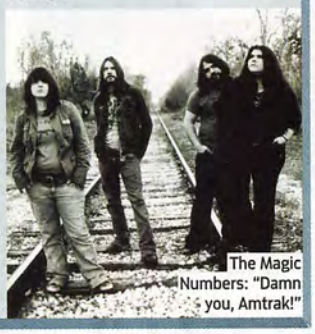
CAPITOL

Harmonizing Brit siblings push the button marked "majestic"

Brother-sister pairings can make for weird, sexless pop music (think of the Carpenters, if you dare) and, unpromisingly, the Magic Numbers consist of two sets of sibs—Romeo and Michele Stodart and Angela and Sean Gannon. Yet there's a sorcery that occurs when the globetrotting Stodarts (born in Trinidad, raised in New York and London) trade candied harmonies that only a churl would deny. Better still, their group's debut album brims with uncynical yet artfully arranged songs of heartache and encouragement, to which Romeo's stinging, trebly guitar and Sean Gannon's brusque drums add whip-smart edge, like punk kids let loose on the Lovin' Spoonful songbook. Amidst this balmy accumulation of "oohs," "ahhhs" and "doop-doops," "Love Me Like You" is the genuine showstopper—a puppyish overflow of nearly sappy handclaps and fingerpopping basslines that resolve in a vocal-and-guitar crescendo that's too powerful to be dimissed as twee. Resistance is useless.

TONY POWER

DOWNLOAD: "Mornings Eleven," "Love Me Like You," "Don't Give Up the Fight"



The Magic Numbers: "Damn you, Amtrak!"

MAGIC NUMBERS: STEVE GULLICK

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Franz Ferdinand regret renting the world's tallest duplex.

JUST DANDIES

Scottish stars still like to flirt with boys, dance beats

FRANZ FERDINAND

YOU COULD HAVE IT SO MUCH BETTER ... WITH FRANZ FERDINAND ✪✪✪✪

EPIC

THE PARADOX OF Franz Ferdinand's second album is that the best thing on it is the least Franz Ferdinand–like. Instead of their trademark mode of flustered disco-punk, "Fade Together" is a gorgeously torpid piano ballad, whose ebbing waltz-time rhythm matches the languid nihilism of the lyric (which could be about a suicide pact, or sharing a needle, but either way is equally alluring and disturbing). Elsewhere, though, Franz's attitude seems to have been "Och, let's not mess with a winning formula, shall we, lads?"

Then again, the formula—gawky whiteboy funk topped by Alex Kapranos's suave croon—is winsome. Franz Ferdinand are the latest in a long lineage of British bands who use scratchy guitars in a way that somehow feels pop rather than rock, fronted by fey young men who seduce girls by making like they're more interested in boys. Last time, it was the bisexual epiphany of "Michael"; this time, it's the homoerotic ardor of "This Boy" and the saucy boast "Your famous friend/Well I blew him before you" in "Do You Want To." A glorious, gleeful romp jam-packed with quotables, it's this album's "Take Me Out" (whose riff gets recycled on another killer tune, "I'm Your Villain"). In a rockier vein, "Evil and a Heathen" stomps like Iggy Pop circa *Lust For Life*.

Contrast Franz with the plain fare that passes for Britrock nowadays—the steady drizzle of rhythmically inert post-Coldplay mope—and the appeal of the group's dancey grooves, dandy verve and mischievous wit is easy to understand. But when you compare Franz with the art-rock ancestors they invoke or echo—Roxy Music, David Bowie, Wire, Talking Heads—their achievement seems more modest. With that breed, it was a matter of honor to attempt a giant leap on each album. Apart from "Fade Together," Franz's second effort shies away from such challenges. It'll do just fine for now. But here's hoping for a torturously difficult third album.

SIMON REYNOLDS

DOWNLOAD: "Fade Together," "Do You Want To," "I'm Your Villain"

ALEH KAPRANOS'S CURRENT LISTENING

THE MAGIC NUMBERS
THE MAGIC NUMBERS *CAPITOL*

GEORGE HARRISON
ALL THINGS MUST PASS *CAPITOL*

Tea" makes brutally clear, charm doesn't come so easily to McCartney anymore. And though it's good of him to put in a word for kindness and creativity, wisdom doesn't seem to have taken charm's place.

ROBERT CHRISTGAU

DOWNLOAD: "Fine Line"

THELONIOUS MONK WITH JOHN COLTRANE

AT CARNEGIE HALL ✪✪✪✪

EPIC

Two jazz immortals parry at a New York concert date newly discovered in Library of Congress vaults

They should have been incompatible. Thelonious Monk played piano in fits and starts: a lumpy chord here, a dissonant jab and a sideways run there and pauses like potholes everywhere. By contrast, John Coltrane's tenor saxophone was rhapsodic, moving in long, articulate lines and barely stopping for breath. Yet for several months in 1957, Coltrane fronted Monk's quartet and they did wonders for each other. Monk's abruptness made Coltrane sound suaver than he ever would again; Coltrane wrapped Monk's angularity in sensual curves. The quartet recorded only three songs in a studio, and continued performing steadily for months before making this suddenly discovered, high-quality, invaluable concert recording. It's full of playful, unfamiliar takes on Monk's inimitably skewed tunes, testifying to how brilliantly opposites can interact.

JON PARELES

DOWNLOAD: "Epistrophy," "Blue Monk," "Evidence"

MY MORNING JACKET

Z ✪✪✪

ATO/RCA

Trippy Southern men break through into the rock stratosphere

When you're floating in space, your ride makes a difference. The Kentucky-based, cosmos-bound My Morning Jacket gained renown by cobbling together charmingly rustic neo-psychedelia, but here they burst into blockbuster mode. Recording in a fancy upstate New York studio with John Leckie, who's twisted knobs for many mood-altering acts (Pink Floyd! Radiohead!), MMJ abandon any vestige of hayseed naiveté on lustrous seven-minute epics and beguiling stabs at pop. The band's warm way with weirdness remains; it's just flashier now, thanks to better production and skillful new note-benders Carl Broemel on guitar and Bo Koster on keys. Warbler supreme Jim James sounds more confident, though still plenty dreamy, as he offers his usual round of deep thoughts and buzzed jokes. You can

FRANZ: PEROU

let this one grow on you like a summer beard.

ANN POWERS

DOWNLOAD THIS: "Anytime," "Knot Comes Loose"

NIGHTMARE OF YOU

NIGHTMARE OF YOU ✪✪✪

THE BEVONSHIRE LABEL/EAST WEST

Former punks clean up nicely for the ladies

With their ingratiating puppy dog of a debut, this Long Island foursome homes in on a demographic that has come to be personified by Natalie Portman's character in *Garden State*: girls who love the Shins. Formerly a guitarist with hardcore rockers the Movielife, frontman Brandon Reilly reinvents himself here as a sensitive melodist, supplementing his new band's ardent jangle-pop with cutely morbid sentiments ("I Want to Be Buried in Your Backyard") and tremulous yelps borrowed from '80s over-emoters like Morrissey and Robert Smith. The skybound tunes seldom flag (and even reach dizzying heights on "My Name Is Trouble"), but Reilly's lover-boy persona is generally more corny than horny. That said, the sweetly dirty "Thumbelina" sets a new standard for finger-fetish love songs.

DENNIS LIM

DOWNLOAD: "My Name Is Trouble," "Thumbelina"

NORTH MISSISSIPPI ALLSTARS

ELECTRIC BLUE WATERMELON ✪✪✪

ATO

Cocky Caucasian blues brothers blast right out of Hazzard County

While the first generation of white blues blasters lapped up their licks secondhand from recordings, guitarist Luther Dickinson and his drumming brother, Cody, acquired their considerable chops and hell-raising nerve at the feet of such revered Mississippi Hill Country neighbors as fife-and-drum master Otha Turner and juke-joint king Junior Kimbrough. "If I didn't have my memories, I'd be so broke-down po'," sings Luther, and these unrepentant rockers' fine autobiographical album conjures up all the ass-shaking hotties, bottomland bootleggers and modern primitives any pair of crazy white boys could ever hope to commune with. Producer-father Jim Dickinson, and guests Lucinda Williams and Robert Randolph, add swamp, sass and space to a record that gracefully balances dirty-South revelry with gorgeous graveyard reveries.

RICHARD GEHR

DOWNLOAD: "Hurry Up Sunrise," "Mean Ol' Wind Died Down"

My Morning Jacket in whose-beard-can-grow-fastest contest.

SINEAD O'CONNOR

THROW DOWN YOUR ARMS ✪✪✪

THAT'S WHY THERE'S CHOCOLATE AND VANILLA

Ireland's priestess of rebellion chants down Babylon with an entire album of rousing 1970s reggae

The standout on Sinead O'Connor's first album since "retiring" from the music business two years ago is an innocent wonder: "Curly Locks," about a new dreadlock who's concerned his girlfriend will reject him. For Ms. No Locks to record a full reggae set, covering each song exactly like the original, rivals Gus Van Sant's odd shot-for-shot remake of Hitchcock's *Psycho*. Still, O'Connor destroyed her stardom ripping up a photo of the Pope on *Saturday Night Live*, so she's earned this curiosity. Her voice, mixed louder than in the originals, inherently jostles with material sung and framed by men. And taking five tracks to spread the word of Burning Spear, a reggae giant whose messianic songs made him the Jamaican equivalent of Curtis Mayfield, is worthy in any context.

ERIC WEISBARD

DOWNLOAD: "Curly Locks," "Downpressor Man"

BRAD PAISLEY

TIME WELL WASTED ✪✪✪

ARISTA

Nashville's most reliable artist writes a great song in the voice of Jack Daniel's

Despite a slight sophomore slump in 2001, Brad Paisley has released a good country album every two years since 1999—one each (how consistent can you get?) in May, June, July and August. As singer, writer and ➜

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STEVE BUSCEMI
ACTOR, *THE ISLAND, ROMANCE AND CIGARETTES*

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MORNING JACKET: DANNY CLINCH; BUSCEMI: JIM SPELLMAN/WIREIMAGE.COM

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BORDERS

The Rolling Stones: Still really old after all these years.

HARD AGAIN

Former World's Greatest Band show how they used to do it

THE ROLLING STONES

A BIGGER BANG ✪✪✪✪

VIRGIN

OLD ROCKERS MAKE too many promises they can't keep. So you can bet the life and lightness of the Rolling Stones' twenty-third studio album will be considered a miracle. Without playing "best since" games, just say it ranks near the top of the eight they've manufactured since 1980. Note, however, that there are only eight, most of which drag or suck. Not even the most propulsive songs on 1994's *Voodoo Lounge* or 1997's *Bridges to Babylon* approach the driving interlock of "Rough Justice": Mick Jagger's high-energy drawl powered by Keith Richards's rude precision and Charlie Watts's uncommonly ecstatic beat. But if *A Bigger Bang*'s lead track is worthy of *Exile on Main Street*, it would fall in line somewhere to the rear. "Best since" is a tough game with these guys.

Although Ron Wood's slide and Darryl Jones's bass are also major positives on "Rough Justice," it's the three original Stones who make the album go—Jagger even plays bass on five tracks, although not the strongest ones. Apparently, Watts's recovery from throat cancer both inspired rock's greatest drummer to top the high standards he's seldom slipped below and gave his old comrades spiritual space to renew what was once one of rock's most fruitful partnerships. Jagger is leaner and less phlegmy throughout, and Richards hasn't come up with a guitar part as addictive as the one on "Rain Fall Down" since the days when he was running on his own blood.

The lyrics aren't bad either: "Once upon a time I was your little rooster/Now I'm just one of your cocks" is only the first of many vernacular twists that prove Jagger is trying. There's even a decent Bush-bashing song. One puzzle remains, however: why anyone should care about the ideas and travails, much less effort level, of this monumentally wealthy, monumentally self-involved roué who claims he can't hold a woman and probably deserves no better. Jagger remains an A-list celebrity, so some will care, and rock aesthetes will be piqued by his resurrection. But where once he was a generation's reality principle, his emotional distance long since degenerated into cynicism. Coming back from that would be the real miracle.

ROBERT CHRISTGAU

DOWNLOAD: "Rough Justice," "Oh No, Not You Again"

JAGGER IS LEANER AND LESS PHLEGMY.

player, he's a gifted classicist who never overextends himself, always warm yet often droll, even when he quick-picks on guitar. *Time Well Wasted* is a fine place to make his acquaintance. The hit "Alcohol" is the most balanced drinking song ever written, yet also damn funny, while "Waitin' on a Woman" is one of the tenderest sexist clichés you'll ever hear. Typically, however, none of the many other winners here wins as big, not even the title tune, which turns his leisureliness into a philosophy. Expect more sure shots in September of 2007.

ROBERT CHRISTGAU

DOWNLOAD: "Alcohol," "Waitin' on a Woman"

SEAN PAUL

THE TRINITY ✪✪

VP/ATLANTIC

Ganja-lovin' king of dancehall gets lethargic the third time around

With the multiplatinum sales of 2002's *Dutty Rock*, Sean Paul became Jamaican dancehall's international ambassador: Propulsive Eastern riddims and sugar-crusted melodies on "Get Busy" and "Like Glue" gave urban music an energy boost. But his third album feels curiously behind-the-curve. Pro-spliff anthem "We Be Burnin' (Legalize It)" may be a topical middle finger to Supreme Court justices but the sentiment sounds rusty coming from a man who once went top 10 with the less preachy "Gimme the Light." Club-friendly "Touch My Body" is a highlight, but only because Nina Sky's guest crooning serves as a refreshing alternative to Sean Paul's monotonous patois. The recent success of Rihanna's "Pon de Replay," which borrows from the Sean Paul sound, is continuing evidence that dancehall is here to stay. It's just that Sean Paul is no longer its leading exporter.

JASON KING

DOWNLOAD: "Touch My Body"

LIZ PHAIR

SOMEBODY'S MIRACLE ✪✪✪✪

CAPITOL

Tell-all impulse intact, Phair matures—and rocks out—adventurously

Good for Liz Phair: She's weathered the shoulda-known-better critical carping and shoulda-sold-better sales of her supposed "sell out," 2003's *Liz Phair*, and come back with another brazenly varied set. Sustaining the (true? faux?) autobiographical details in her conversational lyrics for five albums without lapsing into repetition or narcissism is a real achievement (Loudon Wainwright III is her only competition). "Got My Own Thing" is typical of the complex notions in this pop/rock/ballad/rave-up song cycle: She's falling for a guy she knows could either prove a keeper or a dawg, and either way she gets off on the thrill. Refusing to be hemmed in by her age (heading toward 40, the fuck-around girl of *Exile in Guyville* has become an adult both more hardheadedly realistic and genuinely erotic), she's fast approaching Underrated Treasure status.

KEN TUCKER

DOWNLOAD: "Why I Lie," "Can't Get out of What I'm Into," "Got My Own Thing"

Wanna play catch, Princess Superstar?

PRINCESS SUPERSTAR

MY MACHINE ✪✪✪

CORRUPT CONGLOMERATE/!K7

Potty-mouthed, glamorous MC suffers high-concept overload

Thanks to Kool Keith, who perfected the genre, many MCs get the urge to make a skit-heavy sci-fi concept album. That urge should be strenuously resisted. There's plenty to admire about NYC rapper Concetta Kirschner's fifth album, chiefly the brain-scouringly inventive electro-house beats (producers include Armand Van Helden and current go-to guy Jacques Lu Cont) and smart couplets like "I never knew about the Bloods and the Crips/But I know about the tucks and the nips" ("Famous"). But it lasts for almost 80 unrelenting minutes, by which time the clunky satire (there's an overstretched narrative about a self-obsessed celebrity ruling the world in 2080), lame skits and hyperactive rhymes have left listeners feeling as

I LOVE THIS CD!

LYNDA CARTER
ACTRESS, *WONDER WOMAN, THE DUKES OF HAZZARD*

WILLIE NELSON
COUNTRYMAN
(LOST HIGHWAY)

"He has a wicked sense of humor, and considering his extracurricular activities, reggae was a perfect thing to try."

STONES: MARK SELIGER; PRINCESS SUPERSTAR: NED AMBLER; CARTER: JON KOPALOFF/FILMMAGIC.COM

Sigur Ros: "Princess Superstar is so hot, it makes my ears hurt."

though they've been pinned against the wall of a sweaty club by a squawking cokehead.

DORIAN LYNSKEY

DOWNLOAD: "Famous," "Artery"

AMY RIGBY

LITTLE FUGITIVE ✪✪✪

SIGNATURE SOUNDS

Rock's greatest songwriter-housewife considers middle age, dead punks

Amy Rigby was never young—not as an artist. After two obscure group stints, she emerged in 1996 with *Diary of a Mod Housewife*, which chronicled a 37-year-old's failing marriage, and that's her baseline. Rigby brings to the theme of courtship after 40 the freshness ordinary songwriters bring to teen lust. Her voice sturdy down to its country quaver and her musicians adepts of folk-rock backup, she sings about her new husband's ex as no one ever has and all the ways he loves her as if she still thinks she deserves to crack Nashville's money machine. She does, too—lyric for lyric, tune for tune, she's one of the great unknown American songwriters. She even gets away with describing her dreams. "Dancing With Joey Ramone," that one's called.

ROBERT CHRISTGAU

DOWNLOAD: "Dancing With Joey Ramone," "The Trouble With Jeanie," "I Don't Wanna Talk About Love No More"

SHAGGY

CLOTHESDROP ✪

GEFFEN

Jamaican singer and ex-Marine, born Orville Richard Burrell, hits the skids

As dancehall was thriving in 2000, so was Shaggy, with the pop smashes "It Wasn't Me" and "Angel." But despite shared roots, there was little kinship between him and the music; Shaggy was a teddy bear without any rough edges. On *Clothesdrop* he overcompensates, trying to display his dancehall bona fides—a keen sense of rhythm, bawdy lyrics ("Don't Ask Her That"), an homage to a past icon (echoing the velvet crooner Barrington Levy on "Broadway"). But Shaggy has one of the most grating voices in pop, a buzz that sounds as if he's nursing a head cold, and those smashes were bolstered by the vocal confections of partner Rik Rok, who is nowhere to be found here. Instead, there's a Black Eyed Pea ("Shut Up and Dance"), a Pussycat Doll ("Supa Hypnotic") and the palpable sweat of a man trying to figure out what he's good at, a decade too late.

JON CARAMANICA

DOWNLOAD: None

SIGUR RÓS

TAKK ✪✪✪✪

GEFFEN

Iceland's premier—OK, only—prog-rock ensemble make their masterpiece

Experimental, mostly instrumental, Icelandic … no wonder Sigur Rós have a reputation for impenetrability. Their last album was called ( ), the songs had no names and it sounded like a funeral in a rainstorm. But on this fourth full release, the band opens up emotionally, warming up their lengthy jams to a slow burn to create intoxicating, meditative rock that's perfect for the Radiohead/Coldplay crowd. *Takk* still concerns the rough beauty of blasted landscapes and frosty twilights, but these new songs are full of life (on "Sé Last" there's a brass band for light relief). For all we know they could be singing recipes for baked puffin, but songs like "Hippípolla" unfurl with such elemental majesty that you can just glory in the sound.

ANDREW HARRISON

DOWNLOAD: "Hippípolla," "Med Blódnasir"

SWITCHFOOT

NOTHING IS SOUND ✪✪

COLUMBIA

God-lovin' boarders rock it clean

"Happy is a yuppie word," Jon Foreman earnestly snarls on Switchfoot's latest slab of uplift rock. He pinched the line from a Bob →

SIGUR RÓS: HELEN WOODS

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Gretchen Wilson: Here for the party, wallpaper.

BIBLE BELTER

The all-American girl: she loves booze, sex and the flag

GRETCHEN WILSON

ALL JACKED UP ✪✪✪✪

EPIC

IS THERE A pop star right now who embodies the multifaceted glory of the American woman better than Gretchen Wilson? Gwen's too Hollywood, Beyoncé's too unattainable, Mariah's—well, Mariah's a little erratic. Kelly Clarkson comes close, but she's a bit too sweet.

Wilson, however, wouldn't even shake sweet's hand. Last year she yee-hawed her way into the nation's heart with "Redneck Woman," a foul-mouthed cowgirl salute that sat—legs defiantly uncrossed—atop the country charts for weeks and helped her debut go multiplatinum.

On her second rowdy paean to modern-day domesticity, Wilson still gets shitfaced (bourbon-swilling single "All Jacked Up"), spits tobacco juice ("Skoal Ring") and talks trash about high-class broads (the Paris Hilton–dissing "California Girls"). But then there's "Full Time Job"—a twangy ballad about what results from those makeout sessions in the Dairy Queen parking lot, and working moms trying to deal with changing the baby while they pay the bills. It's fed-up and proud at the same time, a kind of *Desperate Housewives* meets *Trailer Fabulous*.

It might seem peculiar that this redneck poster girl comes from the decidedly blue state of Illinois, well north of the Mason-Dixon line. But she's also a former bartender with an eighth-grade education who grew up in a double-wide. And in a country where redneck has gone national—NASCAR on network television, Wal-Mart spreading from Arkansas to Vermont, a President in cowboy boots—Gretchen Wilson is practically Betsy Ross.

She even waves a flag on "Politically Uncorrect," her grammatically uncorrect pledge of allegiance to the Bible, the troops and the red-white-and-blue. The title's a ruse: What's less unpopular than supporting the troops? It sounds like a GOP stump speech. She's at least as qualified as that other GW, and way more country. Gretchen for Prez in 2008?

OK, maybe not. But those debates with Hillary sure would be fun.

JOSH EELLS

DOWNLOAD: "All Jacked Up," "Full Time Job," "Politically Uncorrect"

GRETCHEN WILSON'S CURRENT LISTENING

JON NICHOLSON A LIL SUMP'M SUMP'M *WARNER BROS.*

MONTGOMERY GENTRY YOU DO YOUR THING *COLUMBIA*

Dylan quote, but Foreman, a philosophical surf master, sidesteps sarcasm instead, making the phrase earnest enough to fit Switchfoot's inspirational agenda. He's a decent lyricist—his sharply worded tracts about sin and transcendence, along with the band's Foo-bulous tightness, make Switchfoot stadium heroes for a post-denominational age. Teen believers will appreciate anthems like "Golden" and righteous protests like "Easier Than Love" ("Sex is currency," Foreman observes, pummeling an easy target). But Switchfoot's spirit is cleansed in a bad way by generic mixing and production. We are all equal in the eyes of the Lord, but in the ears of rock lovers, a little bit more sand might be nice.

ANN POWERS

DOWNLOAD: "The Shadow Proves the Sunshine," "Golden"

BEN TAYLOR

ANOTHER RUN AROUND THE SUN ✪✪✪✪

IRIS/RED

Son of '70s singer-songwriters James Taylor and Carly Simon is a chip off two old blocks

MY DADDY'S FAMOUS

Ben Taylor debuted strikingly with 2003's *Famous Among the Barns*, in which a crack group christened the Ben Taylor Band showed off the Massachusetts native's limpid songwriting. Sparser and sensitively cast, this even better collection was recorded, scrupulously, in London. Taylor has a fluid voice undrawn to the dramatic and fancy; like his songs, it's composed and collected. Singing the elegant dart of "Digest," Taylor deals with losing a great friend to jail. But the pain is, as in Taylor's parents' music, patiently articulated instead of howled. In "Think a Man Would Know," where background chorales heighten the worry and confidence and romanticism, Taylor longs to "sand the edges of my soul" in order to merge with the soul of someone else. And the slightly funk-driven love song "Always" offers a melodic lucidity only the best singer-songwriters achieve. At 27, Taylor is already one of those.

JAMES HUNTER

DOWNLOAD: "Think a Man Would Know," "Digest," "Always"

311

DON'T TREAD ON ME ✪✪

VOLCANO/JIVE

Rap-metal's mellowest band might get angry at you if they weren't so freakin' irie

From the sandal-wearing, crunchy-granola wing of the rap-rock spectrum, 311 was a more cheerful

WILSON: KRISTIN BARLOWE

311: Rap-metal's best-dressed band.

version of Linkin Park long before Linkin Park eclipsed them on the sales charts. *Don't Tread on Me* barely breaks a sweat as it revisits the lukewarm metal riffs, barely passable rapping and sunny Caribbean choruses of the Omaha-bred quintet's previous seven studio albums. Even when he threatens to "knock you down" on the mildly agitated title song, perpetually unruffled vocalist Nick Hexum sounds as if he'd rather be rolling spliffs. "Whiskey and Wine" is the sole surprise, a cautionary tale about the evils of boozing. "Waiting" is more the band's speed: a loping, rolling approximation of a reggae groove in which Hexum extols the virtues of chilling out.

GREG KOT

DOWNLOAD: "Whiskey and Wine"

TRAPT

SOMEONE IN CONTROL ✪✪

WARNER BROS.

A tortured hard rock cry for help. Wah!

Between wailing "My addictions know no boundaries" and feeling "so disconnected," overwrought Trapt frontman Chris Brown seems like a man on the verge of popping a rod. The Southern-Cali hard rocker should find solace in his band's almost preternatural command of the loud/soft dynamics and computer-enhanced guitar crunch that make radio programmers salivate. It's a skill-set that yielded a smash in '03, the head-bobbing "Headstrong," and Trapt don't tamper with it on their second major-label outing. So even if Brown isn't exaggerating when he claims, "I'm always questioning my sanity," at least he won't have any trouble paying for a good shrink.

TOM BEAUJOUR

DOWNLOAD: "Stand Up"

PAUL WALL

THE PEOPLE'S CHAMP ✪✪✪

SWISHAHOUSE/ASYLUM/ATLANTIC

Hypnotically unhurried H-Town MC argues for the 5-mph speed limit

Paul Wall is the poet laureate of loitering: This self-declared "undisputed king of the parking lot," has mastered the art of looking good and going nowhere. "I'm on the block, posted up like a mailbox," he raps on the fantastically woozy "Sittin' Sidewayz"—a strange boast anywhere but Houston, where cars are more like trophies than transportation. As Wall says, this is music for rides with gigantic subwoofers: "I make the trunk dance around like it's doing jumping jacks." Indeed, "Internet Going Nutz" is a punishing salute to online dating so bass-heavy it's practically got gravitational pull. Wall narrowly escapes car-crazed monotony thanks to his engrossingly charming flow and his other great subject: diamond fronts, which he celebrates in an array of unlikely metaphors ("chandelier," "disco ball," "ice cube tray"). This is materialism at its most mesmerizing.

JONAH WEINER

DOWNLOAD: "Sittin' Sidewayz"

BLENDER APPROVED

THE BEST NEW RELEASES FROM THE PAST MONTHS

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BANG BANG ROCK & ROLL

BAMANA RECORDINGS/FIERCE PANDA IMPORT

Smartypants rawk about modern art and Italian currency from London's best new band.

NEW PORNOGRAPHERS

TWIN CINEMA

MATADOR

Canadian power-pop whizzes ease up on the throttle for a melancholy meditation on aging gracefully.

BOYZ N DA HOOD

BOYZ N DA HOOD

BAD BOY

Led by breakout MC Young Jeezy, these superthugs make their drawled threats snap like gunfire.

SUFJAN STEVENS

ILLINOIS

ASTHMATIC KITTY

Two down, 48 to go: The oddball Midwesterner serves up a whimsical pop tribute to the Prairie State.

AMADOU & MARIAM

DIMANCHE À BAMAKO (SUNDAY IN BAMAKO)

NONESUCH

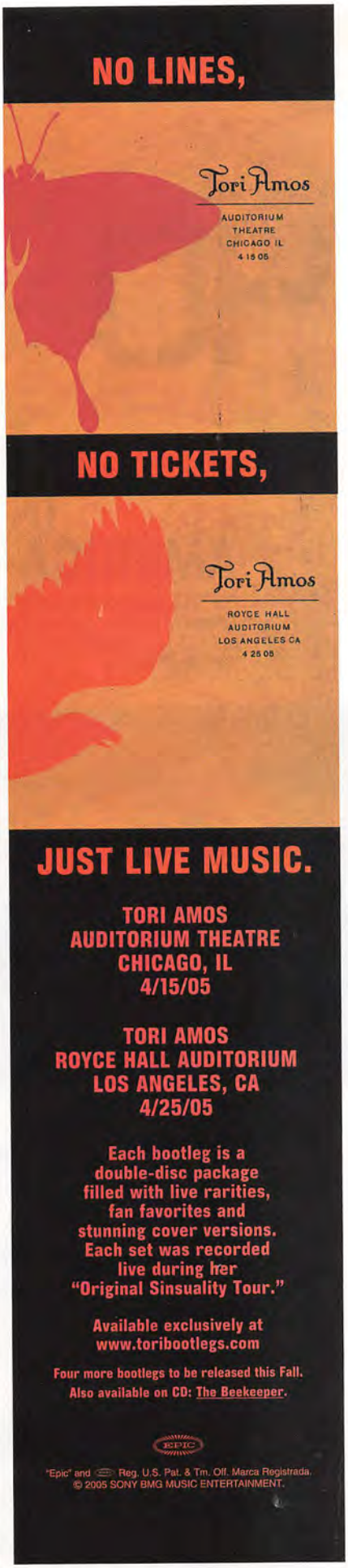
Blind duo from Mali make lively, lovely, celebratory African music.

KANYE WEST

LATE REGISTRATION

ROC-A-FELLA

Hip-hop's head of the class returns for Lesson Two: a witty, wildly ambitious celebration of all things 'Ye.

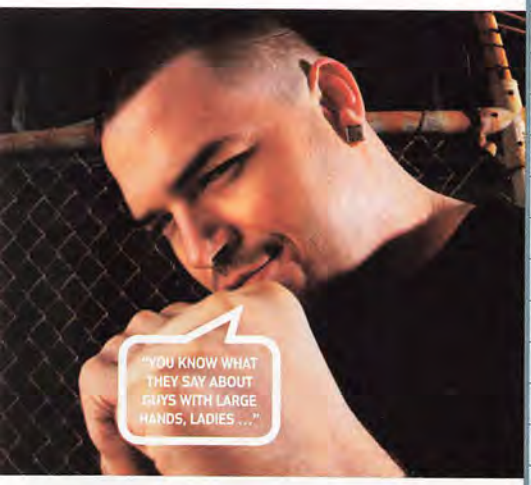


311: MYRIAN SANTOS-KAYDA/ZOMBA LABEL GROUP 2005

THE

40 MOST POPULAR SONGS IN AMERICA

COLLEGE DROPOUTS, SLOW-MOVING TEXANS—NO ONE CAN DEFEAT THE ANIMATED MONKEYS THIS MONTH!



2

PAUL WALL

"SITTIN' SIDEWAYZ"

THE PEOPLE'S CHAMP

This blingophiliac MC is the latest talent to come creeping out of Houston's rap scene—these guys don't go anywhere in a hurry, and make music just as slow-moving. The video is already dominating MTV2 and BET—plus, if you visit djpaulwall.com, you can enter a contest to win Wall's own diamond-studded grill. So icy ... so unhygienic!

HOW WE DID IT

HITS daily double

The Most Popular Songs chart is based on radio and video airplay and album sales. Provided by HITSDailyDouble.com: "Proof that any idiot in the music business can have a Web site."

POSITION	TITLE	ARTIST	ALBUM/LABEL
1	"FEEL GOOD INC."	GORILLAZ	*DEMON DAYS* VIRGIN
2	"SITTIN' SIDEWAYZ"	PAUL WALL	*THE PEOPLE'S CHAMP* SWISHAHOUSE/ASYLUM/ATLANTIC
3	"GOLD DIGGER"	KANYE WEST	*LATE REGISTRATION* ROC-A-FELLA
4	"STARS"	SWITCHFOOT	*NOTHING IS SOUND* COLUMBIA
5	"LET ME HOLD YOU"	BOW WOW	*WANTED* COLUMBIA/SONY URBAN
6	"SHAKE IT OFF"	MARIAH CAREY	*THE EMANCIPATION OF MIMI* ISLAND
7	"WAKE ME UP WHEN SEPTEMBER ENDS"	GREEN DAY	*AMERICAN IDIOT* REPRISE
8	"WELCOME HOME"	COHEED AND CAMBRIA	*GOOD APOLLO, I'M BURNING ...* COLUMBIA
9	"PON DE REPLAY"	RIHANNA	*MUSIC IN THE SUN* DEF JAM
10	"PLAY"	DAVID BANNER	*CERTIFIED* SRC/UNIVERSAL
11	"BECAUSE OF YOU"	KELLY CLARKSON	*BREAKAWAY* RCA
12	"SUGAR, WE'RE GOING DOWN"	FALL OUT BOY	*FROM UNDER THE CORK TREE* ISLAND
13	"STAND UP"	TRAPT	*SOMEONE IN CONTROL* WARNER BROS.
14	"BEST OF YOU"	FOO FIGHTERS	*IN YOUR HONOR* RCA
15	"OHIO IS FOR LOVERS"	HAWTHORNE HEIGHTS	*THE SILENCE IN BLACK AND WHITE* VICTORY
16	"COOL"	GWEN STEFANI	*LOVE. ANGEL. MUSIC. BABY.* INTERSCOPE
17	"DON'T LIE"	BLACK EYED PEAS	*MONKEY BUSINESS* A&M/INTERSCOPE
18	"FIX YOU"	COLDPLAY	*X&Y* CAPITOL
19	"DON'T CHA"	PUSSYCAT DOLLS	*PCD* A&M/INTERSCOPE
20	"GOOD IS GOOD"	SHERYL CROW	*WILDFLOWER* A&M/INTERSCOPE
21	"WE BELONG TOGETHER"	MARIAH CAREY	*THE EMANCIPATION OF MIMI* ISLAND
22	"THE ONE I LOVE"	DAVID GRAY	*LIFE IN SLOW MOTION* ATO/RMG
23	"RIGHT HERE"	STAIND	*CHAPTER V* ATLANTIC
24	"ALL THESE THINGS THAT I'VE DONE"	THE KILLERS	*HOT FUSS* ISLAND
25	"LIKE YOU"	BOW WOW	*WANTED* COLUMBIA/SONY URBAN
26	"DON'T TREAD ON ME"	311	*DON'T TREAD ON ME* VOLCANO/JIVE
27	"DOESN'T REMIND ME"	AUDIOSLAVE	*OUT OF EXILE* INTERSCOPE
28	"JUST WANT YOU TO KNOW"	BACKSTREET BOYS	*NEVER GONE* JIVE
29	"BEVERLY HILLS"	WEEZER	*MAKE BELIEVE* GEFFEN
30	"JUST THE GIRL"	THE CLICK FIVE	*GREETINGS FROM IMRIE HOUSE* LAVA/ATLANTIC
31	"LOSE CONTROL"	MISSY ELLIOTT	*THE COOKBOOK* VIOLATOR/GOLDMIND/ATLANTIC
32	"BURN IT UP"	R. KELLY	*TP.3 RELOADED* JIVE
33	"YOU'LL THINK OF ME"	KEITH URBAN	*GOLDEN ROAD* CAPITOL
34	"FINE LINE"	PAUL MCCARTNEY	*CHAOS AND CREATION IN THE BACKYARD* CAPITOL
35	"YOU AND ME"	LIFEHOUSE	*LIFEHOUSE* GEFFEN
36	"BACK THEN"	MIKE JONES	*WHO IS MIKE JONES?* SWISHAHOUSE/ASYLUM/WARNER BROS.
37	"THE SUFFERING"	COHEED AND CAMBRIA	*GOOD APOLLO, I'M BURNING ...* COLUMBIA
38	"WHERE ARE YOU"	OUR LADY PEACE	*HEALTHY IN PARANOID TIMES* COLUMBIA
39	"BEHIND THESE HAZEL EYES"	KELLY CLARKSON	*BREAKAWAY* RCA
40	"GOOD PEOPLE "	JACK JOHNSON	*IN BETWEEN DREAMS* BRUSHFIRE/UNIVERSAL

SWITCHFOOT

"STARS"

NOTHING IS SOUND

"And the Lord said, 'Let there be Jesus rock,' and it was good." Chief foot-switcher Jon Foreman and his longhaired San Diego bros love God, their ex-girlfriends, catching waves and rocking stadiums full of postpubescent evangelicals—not necessarily in that order. Their tour just wound down, but catch 'em again in November when they take over NYC's Times Square.

COHEED AND CAMBRIA

"WELCOME HOME"

GOOD APOLLO, I'M BURNING STAR IV: VOLUME ONE. FROM FEAR THROUGH THE EYES OF MADNESS

After rejecting their initial album title, *Odyssey in Geosynchronous Orbit Vol. XLVII: I'm the Scattered Echoes of the Infinite Cosmos: Gandalf Edition (Moonbeam Remix)*, this emo-prog troupe settled on the more pithy choice above. In September they start a headlining club tour in Atlantic City.

15

HAWTHORNE HEIGHTS

"OHIO IS FOR LOVERS"

THE SILENCE IN BLACK AND WHITE

This cheery little ditty—about cutting your wrists, blacking your eyes and breathing your final breath—probably won't be adopted by the Ohio State Tourism Board anytime soon. But it did help these screamy Dayton punks land a spot on this year's Warped Tour. They just got back from the U.K. and will kick off their U.S. solo dates at the end of this month.

WALL: MIKE FROST; SWITCHFOOT: DANNY CLINCH; COHEED & CAMBRIA: JAMES MINCHIN III

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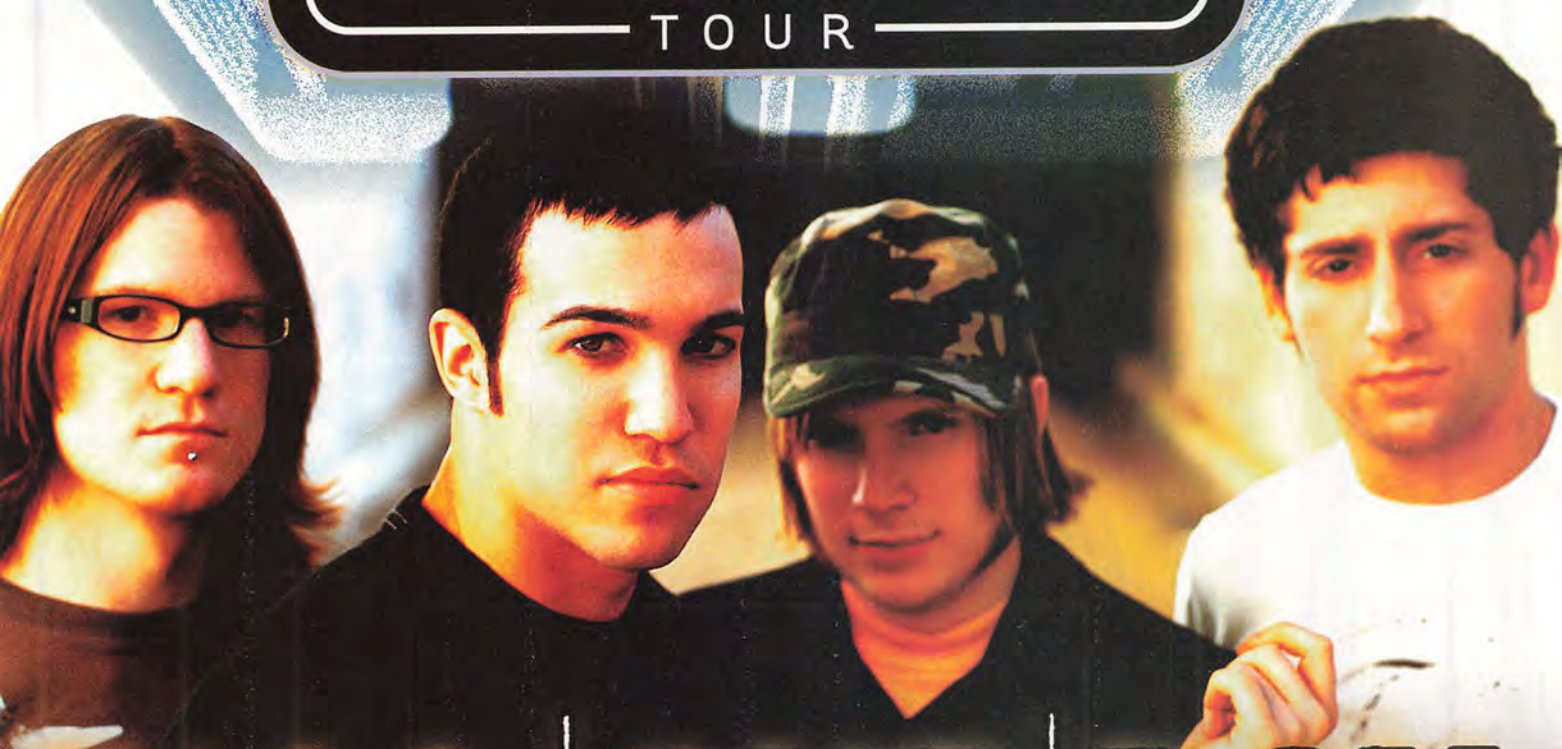

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BLENDER ★ MAGAZINE

The Band, 1970 (left to right): Garth Hudson, Rick Danko, Richard Manuel, Levon Helm and Robbie Robertson.

BARRY FEINSTEIN

THE WOODSMEN

SERIOUS, BEARDED, MOSTLY CANADIAN, THEY BUILT THE IDEA OF MUSICAL AMERICANA

THE BAND
A MUSICAL HISTORY

✪✪✪

CAPITOL

THE BAND HAVE aged more awkwardly than any other major group from the classic-rock era. Even without a Top 20 single, they were stars—a Watkins Glen, New York, show in 1973, five years after their debut, drew the biggest-ever audience for a rock concert at the time.

These days, though, there's something creaky about the music anthologized on this five-discs-plus-DVD set; the Band almost always preferred the mythologized past to unruly modernity, and the pomp and seriousness they brought to history dates them.

Even so, they had a lot going for them: killer ensemble musicianship, three gifted singers whose frayed-and-darned harmonies sounded like nobody else's (guitarist/songwriter Robbie Robertson sang a bit too), smart arrangements and an enduring association with Bob Dylan. And they helped develop the style that would eventually become "Americana"—a little rock, a little country, a dab of blues and New Orleans R&B, and more than a little nostalgia. (Arkansas-born drummer Levon Helm's accent was adopted by the other Band members, all Canadians.) Robertson tended to write romantic fables about the dispossessed folks of the American South, notably "Up on Cripple Creek" and "The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down." As the Band's sense of their own importance grew, though, his ruralist myth-making became overbearing. This was a group that called its first live album *Rock of Ages*, and meant it.

The first and most curious disc of *A Musical History* documents the pre-Band era, starting with their early-'60s sessions as the Hawks, a Toronto-based crew that backed up rockabilly and blues singer Ronnie Hawkins. Their covers of Bobby "Blue" Bland and Muddy Waters songs are the work of a solid bar band—no less, and not much more.

In late 1965, though, they hooked up with Dylan for a few sessions and a scorching tour, from which we hear a couple of live tracks, and developed their rolling, groove-based, keyboard-driven mature style. After Dylan retreated from the public following a motorcycle crash, the then-unnamed group (who nearly crowned themselves "The Crackers") spent the summer and fall of 1967 in a big pink house in upstate New York. Joined on and off by Dylan, they recorded the joyful, relaxed sessions that became his *Basement Tapes* and their debut album, *Music From Big Pink*, which fill most of disc two.

Big Pink's songs evoked dark, open spaces and deep country mystery, and jolted the rock world with their simplicity. The Band calmly swept away the studied artifice of their era's baroque psychedelia. They recorded as they rehearsed, in a circle, facing each other, unmistakably delighting in how rich their voices sounded together.

They recorded two slightly more puffed-up but intermittently gorgeous albums, *The Band* and *Stage Fright*, before fame and drugs started to seriously hamper them. You can hear them scraping for worthy material with 1971's *Cahoots*, as disc four starts; Helm sings the bejeezus out of Dylan's "When I Paint My Masterpiece," about being creatively blocked. They followed with a live album (pepped up by horn arrangements from New Orleans R&B genius Allen Toussaint), a few abortive attempts at new songs, included here—bassist Rick Danko's "Move Me" bears a suspicious resemblance to King Floyd's 1971 R&B hit "Groove Me"—and in 1973, *Moondog Matinee*, a good-natured but sluggish album of rock & roll oldies.

Dylan rescued them again: They backed his *Planet Waves* album and a mammoth 1974 tour, both represented here. Robertson managed to scare up his old songwriting mojo for two more Band albums, and they quit while they were sort of ahead, with a final all-star performance and film, *The Last Waltz*. *A Musical History* ends with a few of its highlights, and even Rob Bowman's adulatory liner notes conveniently omit mention of the albums the reunited Band made in the '90s (without Robertson, who moved to Hollywood and wore sunglasses, or Manuel, who'd hanged himself during a Band tour in 1986). That's somehow fitting for a group that spent its career putting a gilt-edged frame around American history.

DOUGLAS WOLK

DOWNLOAD "The Shape I'm In," "When I Paint My Masterpiece"

THE ARCADE FIRE

THE ARCADE FIRE ✪✪✪

MERGE

The debut EP by the Montreal misfits who don't wanna grow up

The Arcade Fire are a proudly small band unafraid of big ideas. *Funeral*, their 2004 debut, was a concept record about death and natural disaster held together by recurrent imagery, orchestral flourishes and majestically scrappy hooks. This 2003 EP isn't as confidently realized—the sound's a bit muddy, and several songs feel like sketches—but it captures the band's central theme: fantastical retreat from the adult world. Singers Win Butler and Régine Chassagne's favorite metaphors on *Funeral* were snowstorms and power outages; here, cars, subs, rafts, bicycles and spaceships preoccupy them. "I'm Sleeping in a Submarine" is a fantasy of womblike calm during wartime, while "No Cars Go" evokes a Luddite paradise. "Us kids know," Butler announces on the latter—it's the band's mission statement summed up in three words.

JONAH WEINER

DOWNLOAD: "No Cars Go," "Headlights Look Like Diamonds"

THE SCORE

✪✪✪✪✪ A CLASSIC

✪✪✪✪ GREAT

✪✪✪ GOOD

✪✪ MEDIOCRE

✪ FOUL

HARRY BELAFONTE

THE ESSENTIAL HARRY BELAFONTE ✪✪✪✪

RCA/LEGACY

Calypso, gospel, blues, Dylan: Everything he touched turned to lounge

Harry Belafonte has long been one of pop's classiest exhibitors of bad taste. His sensibility takes in the Jewish wedding standard "Hava Nagila," the calypso curio "The Banana Boat Song (Day-O)," which he made famous in 1956, and a version of the blues ballad "Midnight Special" with a young Bob Dylan on harmonica; his husky rendition of "Danny Boy," delivered at Carnegie Hall in 1959, had white women collapsing in heaps. This 37-track overview highlights his smarmy side while keeping an eye on his civil rights record. And a duet with jazz great Lena Horne on "The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face," from their 1970 album and TV special, *Harry & Lena*, remembers a time when the simple fact of two black performers getting cheesy in prime time was a cause for celebration.

KAREN SCHOEMER

DOWNLOAD: "Delia," "Jump in the Line," "On Top of Old Smokey"

The Arcade Fire: Junior proms are different in Canada.

BLIND MELON

TONES OF HOME: THE BEST OF BLIND MELON ✪✪

CAPITOL

Axl Rose's hometown Indiana friend led a doomed L.A. rock band

If a wicked witch wanted to curse a rock band, she'd do well to imitate Blind Melon's fate. The L.A.-based group hit in 1993 with an odd single, the bouncy-depressive "No Rain," whose meaning was obliterated by the cutesiness of the insect-costume-clad urchin girl in its video. Raggedy and long-haired, Blind Melon got tagged "alternative" when all they wanted was to classically rock and jam-band a bit. Critics hated them like Grand Funk, though they were really the next Guess Who, or maybe Bob Seger before *Night Moves*. Then singer Shannon Hoon OD'd. In their tour bus. Cursed! But on the tenth anniversary of that fatal misadventure, slightly surging fan interest led to this remastered comp

ARCADE FIRE: HILARY LEFTIK; MUMMIES: COURTESY MAX KATTUAH

DEMON SEEDS

A delicious brick of garage-pop links the Strokes to the '80s

VARIOUS ARTISTS

CHILDREN OF NUGGETS ✪✪✪✪

RHINO

LIKE THE GUITAR effects that juice so many of its tracks, the legendary *Nuggets* compilation continues to reverberate through rock. The original double LP was put together in 1972 by future Patti Smith guitarist Lenny Kaye, whose collection of unjustly forgotten lowbrow psychedelic gems directly influenced the bottlerocket buzz of punk. By the mid-'80s, garage rock was a living tradition, a loose-knit global scene of bands and collectors and fans who looked backwards and forwards in equal measure.

Children of Nuggets presents the fruits of this era, focusing on the power pop, neo-psychedelia and garage rock that emerged in the wake of punk. That means four discs bursting with jangling guitars and wheezing Farfisa organs and Prozac-obviating melodies that move into your brain and stay for days. Unfortunately, it also means that lots of the poppier songs feature wispy vocals and drums that sound like Styrofoam and other sonic artifacts of the period, maybe the chintziest-sounding era in recorded music. But most of the radio-ready bands rise above the production values: the Sinners, a Swedish surf combo, and the Dentists, a British act who sing about growing strawberries, ride urgent hooks all the way to pop heaven.

Inevitably, quibbles arise. Why the Flamin' Groovies and not Big Star? Where are Opal, the most mesmerizing exponent of L.A.'s Paisley Underground? The track sequence is schizophrenic as well, with crude, visionary retards like the Cramps or the Mummies up against touching New Wavers like the Smithereens or the Posies. But while *Children of Nuggets* is neither as raw nor as weird as the original *Nuggets*, it does prove that ancestor worship can be creative. These bands use nostalgia not as an opiate but as rocket fuel.

ERIK DAVIS

DOWNLOAD: Died Pretty, "Out of the Unknown"; Soft Boys, "I Wanna Destroy You"; Lyres, "Don't Give It Up Now"

The Mummies only went to their doctor for some aspirin!

of twiddling freakouts and painfully piteous ballads. Turns out Blind Melon, though astonishingly self-indulgent, had a whiff of promise. Take that, wicked witch!

ANN POWERS

DOWNLOAD: "2X4," "St. Andrew's Fall"

ROSANNE CASH

SEVEN YEAR ACHE ✪✪✪✪

KING'S RECORD SHOP ✪✪✪✪

INTERIORS ✪✪✪✪

RCA/LEGACY

The three finest works by a country artist who finally went city

Country had its own version of New Wave: spry roots-rock presented with urbane flair and a tousled mane of hair. Rosanne Cash's 1981 hit *Seven Year Ache* defined the moment, going from the perfectly wistful title track to Merle Haggard and Tom Petty covers, and even a fast tune ("What Kinda Girl?") that mentioned sniffing glue. By *King's Record Shop* six years later, Cash was even more exquisite, if a tad less country, nailing "The Way We Make a Broken Heart," finding more pop majesty with "Runaway Train" and establishing her future style with "The Real Me." That tone, therapeutic and coiled, New York rather than Nashville and Woody Allen rather than Woody Guthrie, defines 1990's *Interiors*, a gripping "misery-go-round" that chronicled her dissolving marriage to fellow country semi-star Rodney Crowell. The extra tracks add little to these reissues, but each was a complete package already.

ERIC WEISBARD

DOWNLOAD "Seven Year Ache," "Runaway Train," "Real Woman"

SAM COOKE

THE BEST OF SAM COOKE ✪

NIGHT BEAT ✪✪✪

ONE NIGHT STAND—LIVE AT THE HARLEM SQUARE CLUB ✪✪✪✪

RCA/LEGACY

Two key Sam Cooke albums, and one redundant one, remember a puzzling soul singer

Musically, Rock and Roll Hall of Fame charter member Sam Cooke is a stumper. His voice wasn't just smooth and gritty at the same time, it was also infinitely relaxed—for the many who adore it, a sing-the-phone-book voice. But he was so intent on the pop market that some curmudgeons might prefer the phone book to his orchestral accompaniments. Fortunately, these albums avoid his clumsier commercial endeavors. Even so, bypass *Best of* for Abkco's 30-track *Portrait of a Legend 1951–1964*, which includes all of its 15 songs. But *Night Beat* gets points for conceiving pop as lounge R&B rather than violin schlock, even if Cooke isn't always up to the blues-tinged standards he covers and tries to write. And *Live at the Harlem Square Club*, recorded at a black venue, takes his hits fast and rough. Mythmakers claim this is the real Cooke, which he would have denied. But it's an impressive document whose rousing climax suggests what might have ensued if he hadn't died two years later.

ROBERT CHRISTGAU

DOWNLOAD: "You Send Me"

Sam Cooke: "Ooh, microphone, what's your phone number?"

BOB DYLAN

NO DIRECTION HOME: THE SOUNDTRACK—THE BOOTLEG SERIES VOL. 7 ✪✪✪

COLUMBIA/LEGACY

LIVE AT THE GASLIGHT 1962 ✪✪✪

SONY/BMG

"Don't look back," Bob Dylan said. These records ignore that instruction

The soundtrack to Martin Scorsese's documentary about Bob Dylan's early career is the latest installment of a "bootleg series" that scours (and tries to one-up) the reams of unreleased tapes swapped by Dylan nuts.

Eazy-E: Pictured actual size.

There are a few treasures, especially two incandescent songs excerpted from the so-called "Minnesota hotel tapes" recorded in 1961, and a scalding, bluesy early arrangement of "Leopard-Skin Pill-Box Hat," but also a lot of material whose interest is more historical than musical: a 1959 fragment of a Dylan original, draggy live acoustic performances and alternate versions of seven *Highway 61 Revisited* songs. The *Gaslight* album—sold only through Starbucks—consists of just over half of a driving, much-bootlegged set of performances from a New York café in 1962, when Dylan was still in the thrall of Woody Guthrie and slipping a few impressive originals into his folk-songbook set. It's the missing link between his first two albums; too bad so much of it is still missing.

DOUGLAS WOLK

DOWNLOAD: *Home:* "I Was Young When I Left Home," "Visions of Johanna"; *Gaslight:* "Rocks and Gravel," "Barbara Allen"

EAZY-E

ETERNAL E: GANGSTA MEMORIAL EDITION ✪✪✪

CAPITOL/PRIORITY

The five-foot-five member of rap's first gangsta act talked like a big man

The smallest gangsta had the biggest mouth. Eazy-E gave N.W.A a flippancy that complemented the group's surliness. Even though Ice Cube and MC Ren wrote most of his rhymes, Eazy stood out for his sheer brashness—on the indignant "Niggaz My Height Don't Fight"—and arrestingly nasal vocal tone. The latter made him sound overly excitable on "Automobile," about backseat romantic negotiations, and even irrational, especially on the crime saga "Nobody Move." Drawn largely from his excellent 1988 LP *Eazy-Duz-It*, this set not only captures Eazy's irascibility but also showcases early Dr. Dre post-funk ("Eazy-Duz-It" "Boyz-N-the Hood (remix)"). And though Eazy beat the odds to become a rap star, he couldn't trump every obstacle—he died of AIDS-related complications in 1995.

JON CARAMANICA

DOWNLOAD: "Boyz-N-the Hood (remix)," "Automobile," "Niggaz My Height Don't Fight"

Flamin' Groovies: Beatles haircuts, not fame.

FLAMIN' GROOVIES

SHAKE SOME ACTION ✪✪✪✪

DBK WORKS/RUNT

'60s anachronists bowed to rock's past while predicting its future

In 1976, as punk rock was gnawing through its birth canal, a San Francisco band that had been kicking around since 1965 (and had relocated to the U.K. four years earlier) released its fifth album, a rambunctious jumble of groovy pub rock, hyperactive R&B covers and faux-British-invasion balladeering. It must have come off like a futuristic antique then; now it seems more like a revelation than a relic. The rough-and-tumble shared vocals of Cyril Jordan and Chris Wilson sound like demon ghosts of Lennon-McCartney and Jagger—wannabes, sure, but also forces of nature on their own terms. And the curlicue guitar motif on the title track, elegant in its simplicity, is the rock & roll equivalent of the little black dress—right for any time and any place.

STEPHANIE ZACHAREK

DOWNLOAD: "Shake Some Action," "Teenage Confidential," "I Can't Hide"

QUINCY JONES

FROM Q WITH LOVE ✪✪✪✪

Q'S JOOK JOINT ✪✪✪

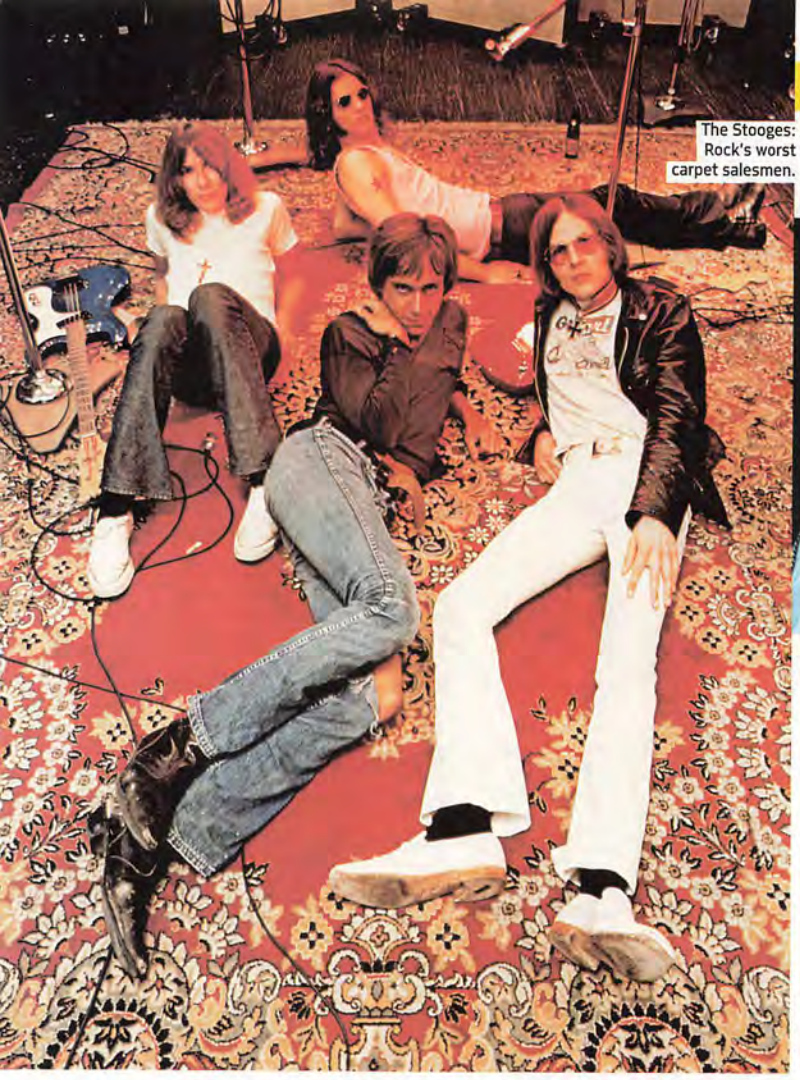
BACK ON THE BLOCK ✪✪✪

UME/HIP-O

The producer behind Michael Jackson had massive talent, Rolodex

This sublimely complete music man does everything but sing. Now 72, Jones made his name as a recording artist with *The Dude*, his 1981 personal breakthrough. There he unveiled the idea that a pop album could be the result of carefully selected singers, instrumentalists and musical and technological ideas realizing the vision of a single coherent pop intelligence. In Jones's →

EAZY-E: FITZROY BARRETT; COOKE: JESS RAND/MICHAELOCHSARCHIVES.COM; GROOVIES: COURTESY ALEC PALAO



The Stooges: Rock's worst carpet salesmen.

case, behind that lay composition study in Paris, playing with Ray Charles, arranging for Frank Sinatra and running—as the first major black record exec—Mercury Records. In 1989, Jones returned to his elastic album form, eager to include rap in his lusciously exacting mix, with *Back on the Block*; in '95, on a jazzier set, he released *Q's Jook Joint*. The '99 two-disc compilation *From Q With Love* showcases his timelessly sculpted love productions; it includes not only prime Michael Jackson but also Tamia's "You Put a Move on My Heart," as perfect a neo-R&B track as exists.

JAMES HUNTER

DOWNLOAD: Tamia, "You Put a Move on My Heart"; James Ingram, El DeBarge, Al B. Sure! and Barry White, "The Secret Garden (Sweet Seduction Suite)"; Michael Jackson, "Liberian Girl"; James Ingram, "One Hundred Ways"

I LOVE THIS CD!

JOHNNY KNOXVILLE
ACTOR, *JACKASS, THE DUKES OF HAZZARD*

JOHNNY CASH AT FOLSOM PRISON (LIVE) *COLUMBIA/LEGACY*

"You can hear prisoners cheer when he talks about shooting a man just to watch him die."

NEW YORK DOLLS

TOO MUCH TOO SOON ✪✪✪✪✪

HIP-O SELECT/MERCURY

Remastered and live-er than it ever was: half of a priceless proto-punk legacy

To help bestow a modicum of spiritual contentment on those born too late to have seen their original incarnation, the New York Dolls released two perfect albums in August 1973 and May 1974. The second ranks second because the greatest David Johansen originals are on the debut—only the climactic "Human Being" achieves the philosophical weight of "Personality Crisis" or "Trash." But if any band today shopped hooks as sure and lyrics as smart as those of "Who Are the Mystery Girls?" "Puss 'n' Boots" or guitarist Johnny Thunders' "Chatterbox," the Strokes would buy a boutique and retire. And the covers are magnificent: a Sonny Boy Williamson song that turns the Chicago blues master into a campy scold, and two R&B novelties whose theatrical potential was barely noticed until the Dolls penetrated their holy essence.

ROBERT CHRISTGAU

DOWNLOAD: "Human Being," "Don't Start Me Talkin'," "(There's Gonna Be a) Showdown"

Sizzla: Just begging to be frisked at customs.

SIZZLA

DA REAL LIVE THING ✪✪✪✪

VP

Rousing CD/DVD showcases Jamaica's newest national hero

With his fervent reggae rallying cries, Sizzla has Jamaica in his pocket. Now he's got Damon Dash there too: The hip-hop mogul recently signed the 29-year-old Rastafarian to his label. This timely reissue, featuring three new tracks and a DVD of interviews and concert footage, shows why he's earned national-hero treatment. Originally released in 2002, this was Sizzla's sixteenth album but his first crowning achievement, a flawless musical union of conflicting personas: Rastafarian and rude boy, lover and fighter. Vacillating between gruff, guttural dancehall chatting and serene, falsetto-tinged singing, Sizzla crafts stirring tunes like "Solid As a Rock." The acoustic remake of "Just One of Those Days" is a fitting finale: heart-rending enough to make a thug—or even a seasoned music mogul—cry.

BAZ DREISINGER

DOWNLOAD: "Thank U Mama," "Solid As a Rock," "Just One of Those Days (Acoustic Version)"

SMASH MOUTH

ALL STAR SMASH HITS ✪✪✪

INTERSCOPE/UME

Surfer boys-next-door keep the hits coming

It's a little worrisome that Smash Mouth refer to their biggest hit, "All Star," in the title of this best-of. It's as if this San Jose band think they can't top themselves. Let their next studio CD deal with that: Here they prove again that they're not a novelty band, having cranked out beer-goggled surf rock so hook-laden it takes up permanent residence in your brain. "Walkin' on the Sun," "Come On, Come On" and the rest aren't hits, they're landmarks on the Pacific Coast Highway. Please designate a driver. In addition to 20 largely charting tunes, this laconically shows what an adventurous cover band they are: The Monkees, Let's Active, ? and the Mysterians and War. That's a brilliant jukebox, and Smash Mouth can keep playing it—and filling it—for quite some time to come.

RJ SMITH

DOWNLOAD: "All Star," "Pacific Coast Party," "Walkin' on the Sun"

SONIC YOUTH

GOO (DELUXE EDITION) ✪✪✪✪✪

GEFFEN/UME

Indie-rock pioneers go major with credibility intact

Fact: If Sonic Youth hadn't signed with Geffen Records (home of Whitesnake and Guns N' Roses) and sold 170,000 copies of 1990's *Goo*, the decade's alt-rock revolution would never have happened. Perhaps the noisiest and most challenging major-label album since the Stooges' *Fun House* in 1970, *Goo* was also a masterpiece, equal to SY's indie-label, ground-smashing *Sister* and *Daydream Nation*. Kim

Smash Mouth enjoy the nuclear-testing exhibit.

STOOGES: COURTESY BEN EDMUNDS; SIZZLA: ANDERSON BALLANTYNE; KNOXVILLE: BARRY KING/WIREIMAGE.COM; SMASH MOUTH: JAY BLAKESBURG/RETNA LTD.

Gordon and Chuck D's duet on "Kool Thing" remains one of the few natural-sounding rock/rap collaborations, while "Tunic" imagines a happier afterlife for '70s superstar and anorexia casualty Karen Carpenter. There are 20 mostly unreleased tracks added to this deluxe edition, including "Lee #2," a song so melodic and lyrically direct it makes Sonic Youth sound like a different band. A different *great* band.

JAMES BARBER

DOWNLOAD: "Disappearer," "Kool Thing"

THE STOOGES

THE STOOGES (DELUXE EDITION) ✪✪✪✪

FUN HOUSE (DELUXE EDITION) ✪✪✪✪✪

RHINO

Detroit dreck-rock genius from when Iggy Pop didn't look like a walnut

As the Detroit-tooled prototypes for punk rock, the Stooges' 1969 debut unveiled the monotonous, thrillingly degraded "I Wanna Be Your Dog" and the pure self-sabotage of 10-minute art-rock bore-athon "We Will Fall." By the following year, they'd learned their lesson, as *Fun House* flattered guitarist Ron Asheton's doped-out blues riffs and Pop's sex-freak gibbering (he'll "stick it deep inside" if you don't look out) with a more vibrant, Don Gallucci–authored mix, in which even the skronking free-jazz saxophone of Steve MacKay proved tolerable. In 2005 it sounds like one crazy scene, not necessarily improved by Disc 2's outtakes (why take 22 of "Loose"? To show how tired they were?), which mostly just prove the lewd and lurid perfection of the originals.

TONY POWER

DOWNLOAD: "I Wanna Be Your Dog," "No Fun," "1970," "T.V. Eye"

VARIOUS ARTISTS

ONE KISS CAN LEAD TO ANOTHER: GIRL GROUP SOUNDS, LOST & FOUND ✪✪✪✪✪

RHINO

Girl fights, unwanted pregnancy and black eyeliner—it's the birth of the rock & roll bad girl

Carole King's worried her parents won't like her boyfriend's haircut. Oh, yeah? Well, Annette Snell of the Fabulettes is so worried about her boyfriend cheating that she's losing a pound a day. And did you hear about Twinkle? She was cheating on her boyfriend the night he crashed his motorbike and died! In the early-'60s a rash of mostly male producers, songwriters and industry opportunists aligned with an army of no-name female singers to create the girl-group sound, a marvelous cacophony of garage rock–fueled bathroom-mirror chatter. This five-hour, 120-song collection elevates the genre to an art form worthy of scholarship, eschewing oldies-radio fare in favor of lesser-known gems awash in defiance and doo-wah soul: the Ikettes's sublimely nonsensical "I'm Blue (The Gong-Gong Song)," the prototypical girl band Luv'd Ones' distortion-drenched "Up Down Sue" and lots more.

KAREN SCHOEMER

DOWNLOAD: Maxine Brown, "Oh No Not My Baby"; P.P. Arnold, "The First Cut Is the Deepest"; the Shangri-La's, "The Train From Kansas City"

The New York Dolls: Ladies, your makeup is all wrong.

P.P. Arnold auditions for *Moesha: The Early Years.*

VARIOUS ARTISTS

NIGHT TRAIN TO NASHVILLE: MUSIC CITY RHYTHM & BLUES, 1945–1970, VOLUME TWO ✪✪✪

COUNTY MUSIC FOUNDATION/LOST HIGHWAY

Elvis, the Beatles and Pearl Jam all found covers in these old songs

Talented nobodies and an occasional genius populate this intriguing two-disc set of black sounds from the home of country music. Male cross-dresser Billie McAllister looks for love in the raucous "31 E. Blues." Johnny Bragg, convicted of rape and sent up for six consecutive 99-year terms, wails the eerie "I'm Free (The Prisoner's Song)" after his sentence is commuted. Passing through town in 1952 with Gay Crosse & the Good Humor Six, future jazz titan John Coltrane unfurls a breathtaking sax solo on "No Better for You." The sublime Arthur Alexander croons the yearning "Soldier of Love," also sung by the Beatles and Pearl Jam. Offering only a few minor hits among 39 stirring tracks, *Night Train Vol. Two* tells the story of a vital underground with mainstream aspirations, where the paydays rarely matched the power in the grooves.

JON YOUNG

DOWNLOAD: Gay Crosse & the Good Humor Six, "No Better for You"; Arthur Alexander, "Soldier of Love"

BLENDER APPROVED

THE BEST REISSUES FROM THE PAST MONTHS

JOHNNY CASH

THE LEGEND

COLUMBIA/LEGACY

He sang about prison, murder, drugs and faith—finally, this country giant has a box worthy of his music.

GARY HIGGINS

RED HASH

DRAG CITY

Crazy, dark, enchanting folk-rock, lost to time when its author was sent to jail in 1973 for possession of weed.

JODECI

BACK TO THE FUTURE

UME/UNIVERSAL

The Hailey bros. loved to sing shirtless—gleaming pecs enhanced their Astroglide-dipped R&B come-ons.

LORETTA LYNN

THE DEFINITIVE COLLECTION

MCA NASHVILLE

Long before *Desperate Housewives*, Lynn stood up for bored and frustrated women. This captures her prime.

OL' DIRTY BASTARD

THE DEFINITIVE OL' DIRTY BASTARD STORY

ELEKTRA/RHINO

He liked it *rawww*. Solo rants and rambles from rap's crazed genius.

IGGY POP

A MILLION IN PRIZES

VIRGIN

For an entire two-disc collection, the Man Who Invented Punk Excess looks at debauchery, both pro and con.

DOLLS: LFI; ARNOLD: TONY GALE/PICTORIAL PRESS.COM

Jack White. Not pictured: cap gun, toy pony.

Meg White beating drums, frequently when she's supposed to.

JACK BE NIMBLE

ROCK PURIST JACK WHITE TURNS INTO A SHOWOFF CARNY THE MOMENT HE STEPS ONSTAGE

THE WHITE STRIPES

GORGE AMPHITHEATER GEORGE, WASHINGTON

AUGUST 6, 2005 ✪✪✪

MAYBE JACK WHITE is mad at the sun for not following his stage directions. In every other way, the scenery at this amphitheater nestled in a volcanic river canyon seems custom-made for a White Stripes show. It's as minimal as nature gets—jagged hills, sagebrush, the flat Columbia River below—and it's pure Americana too. The White Stripes' crimson banners catch the hot wind like flags in a spaghetti Western. But the sun should go down red, not harsh and small like a hard-cooked egg, so the Whites will wait until it's pitch-black to stomp into battle.

Openers Sleater-Kinney are left to tackle the glare of the sunset. The principled Northwest punk trio start with a dissonant racket and sign off an hour later with a jam that leaves one teen fan mumbling, "That's the longest song I've ever heard!" With no Jumbotron screens to maximize Carrie Brownstein's arena-worthy moves, and no color scheme, S-K succeed as an awesome rock band but not as spectacle.

That task is left to Jack and Meg White, who build anticipation for their set by letting the Gun Club's scuzzy 1981 *Fire of Love* LP play in full. "You suck!" bellows one fan uninterested in the music history lesson. "White Stripes!" He's typical of a crowd of 10,000 that includes more Coors guzzlers than candy-cane devotees. How will the duo please this party-hearty bunch?

The answer soon becomes clear. They'll do it with flash! With circus tricks! But not so much with the good old-fashioned music Jack White claims to espouse.

In concert even more than on record, the White Stripes turn style into substance, posing so aggressively that the pretense becomes emotional. On this huge stage, the band's blood-and-bone-colored instruments—Meg's drum kit plus a timpani; a marimba; a black grand piano, and Jack's many guitars—form a fairy-tale tableau. Smoke billows while the wind whips Meg's hair around. (Her kit is positioned sideways, so the crowd can fully view her military drum reports.) Lights flash like the fires of hell. Jack stomps through this severe landscape in gunslinger garb he seemingly took off Bob Dylan, a red bandana cutting across his neck: legend-maker, master of his own myth.

Their set lists tend towards the unpredictable, but tonight they play the hits off their five records, from "Seven Nation Army" to "Blue Orchid." And they rip through them—Meg speeds up until the songs are horse races, and Jack frenzies himself with distortion-soaked solos and operatic shrieks as he hurls from instrument to instrument.

He wrings feedback from a marimba on "The Nurse" (from their adventurous new album *Get Behind Me Satan*) and from the piano on a solo version of Loretta Lynn's "Whispering Sea," kneels to execute a Hendrix-like meltdown on Blind Willie McTell's "Motherless Children Have a Hard Time" and conjures fellow magpies Aerosmith at their badass bluesiest with "The Denial Twist." He bombs through country ballads, garage psychedelia, Delta blues and bluegrass, dodging the percussive bullets Meg shoots at his feet. It's a great show. P.T. Barnum would have been proud.

Call it a circus or an exorcism, but this melee is not a conventional concert. The speedy vibe follows the pace of Jack's mind, and boy does it move fast. But he never relaxes into his songs, so everything below his neck remains a mystery. And Meg's fanatical simplicity never challenges him to reach elsewhere.

But these judgments only matter if the White Stripes act like a rock band, and here at the Gorge, they're not. Instead, this is theater—a very successful conceptual art piece about rock & roll. It might be better if Meg and Jack added some folks onstage. Not more musicians, though. Knife throwers. Bearded ladies. Dancing bears. *ANN POWERS*

HOW'D YOU LIKE THE SHOW?

"I know a lot of people in bands who try to be cool by saying the White Stripes aren't *that* good. I just laugh. They're flat-out fantastic."

MIKE OLSON, 41
SNOWBOARD DESIGNER
PORT ANGELES, WA

"The light show was great, but the music was sloppy. They upped the tempo on a lot of the songs, but I don't think that added any flavor."

NICHOLE BULL, 20
MOVIE THEATER EMPLOYEE
AUBURN, WA

"They do a good job for such a minimal band. It's bluesy rock, and you can never go wrong playing that. There's plenty of places to go with it."

JEREMIAH ENNIS, 26
CAREGIVER
KENNOWICK, WA

JACK: VAUGHN YOUTZ/NEWSCOM; MEG: JOHN SHEARER/WIREIMAGE.COM

Tim Harrington of Les Savy Fav: "Does this tinfoil hat clash with my urine-soaked pants?"

The Go! Team's Ninja (left): Not really a ninja.

INDIEPALOOZA

STRIPTEASES. INTERPRETIVE DANCES. GONGS. IT'S NOT A COLLEGE TALENT SHOW, IT'S A WEEKEND ORGY OF UNDERGROUND FREAKS AND GEEKS

INTONATION FESTIVAL

UNION PARK, CHICAGO

JULY 16–17, 2005 ✪✪✪

MIDWAY THROUGH AN exuberant set by the hip-hop-fueled British pop group **GO! TEAM**, an object launched from the crowd hits singer-rapper Ninja in the chest, mid-prance. Has someone, impatient with the band's flagrantly sunny disco-funk, hurled a diary, or perhaps a juice box? Are terrorists declaring a war on unabashed glee? The item turns out to be a small scroll, and Ninja grins as she reads it out loud: "We love the Go! Team!"

Hippies had a Summer of Love; call this a Weekend of Affection. The first-ever Intonation convenes 21 bands and a handful of DJs who share little more than modest careers, and fans for whom modesty is a sign of integrity and innovation. Pitchfork Media, a website that chronicles indie minutiae, "curated" the fest, a bargain at $22 for a two-day pass. Many acts are welcomed by their biggest-ever crowds—about 15,000 each day—thanks largely to the influence of the site and its online sphere of blogs and message boards. The overwhelmingly polite fans assist post-fest clean-up crews, and even cheer for a whistle solo (courtesy of a barefoot **ANDREW BIRD**, whose live violin loops create a stupor).

Intonation's flirtation with anarchy comes during **LES SAVY FAV**'s late-afternoon set on Sunday. Flabby Brooklyn frontman Tim Harrington, who spikes melancholy melody and stop-start artcore with absurd performance tics—French kissing unsuspecting male photographers, stripteases, scatological call-and-response—sends the crowd surging hard into the stage's barrier. He also convinces everyone to sit down in the dust clouds—then simulate, en masse, the world's largest orgasm.

THE DECEMBERISTS, who play Sunday's whirl of a headlining set with nods to polka and gypsy music, achieve the same feat (sans orgasm) under opposite circumstances. The Portland troupe's nasal singer, former theater geek Colin Meloy, interrupts "The Chimbley Sweep," a sing-along acoustic ditty concerning a "lonely urchin," to courteously ask everyone to sit in unison before he continues. Later, for the nine-or-so-minute-waltz encore "The Mariner's Revenge Song," the band invites the crowd to scream "as if you're being swallowed by a whale." It's a spine-tingling climax. It's also a sign of this audience's cheerfully obliging nature, which explains their bewildering enthusiasm for **DEATH FROM ABOVE 1979**, a fake-metal duo whose thrash barely constitutes homage.

The tightest and twistiest of the festival offer more peculiar pleasures. **DEERHOOF**, an experimental San Francisco foursome, drop huge, jagged chunks of noise into shifting rhythms that set band members' faces scowling with concentration. Satomi Matsuzaki, who stands shorter than her bass amp and breaks into martial-arts-inspired interpretive dance, peppers it all with nonsense yelps.

XIU XIU, a neatly groomed California duo, combine programmed beats, autoharp, gongs, and Jamie Stewart's near-operatic wail into a kind of alien pop so intensely focused (and, ultimately, irritating) the audience seems dazed. The next set—boisterous homemade dance music sometimes frayed with noise, courtesy of Brooklyn ensemble **OUT HUD**—could not stand in starker contrast, illustrating just how wide-ranging indie "rock" has become. For this generation of musicians, modesty embodies gentleness, whimsy, improvisation, female band members and high drama. Grinning frontdude Nic Offer dances spastically and flings water bottles (and eventually himself) into a crowd that nearly matches his uninhibited grooving. If the next day's blogs are any indication, everyone feels the love. *NICK CATUCCI*

ROB GRABOWSKI/RETNA LTD.

New "Legal" Performance Pill Hits Market

Size ▪ Strength ▪ Musculature

In a remarkable turn of events, arguably one of the strangest in the history of athletic performance, an offshoot of research directed to help victims of muscle atrophy has now become an underground cult phenomenon among bodybuilders, world-class athletes and, strangely enough, couch potatoes from the "boomer" generation. And, if consumer sales are any indication of a product's effectiveness, Endothil™-CR is nothing short of a miracle. Both professional athletes and weekend warriors are buying so much Endothil-CR (especially after the ban on steroids and steroid precursors) that finding a box has become just about impossible. Has everyone gone crazy? Well… not really.

Scientific Breakthrough or Dumb Luck?

Although Endothil-CR's functional component was already backed by clinical trials documenting its ability to impact the proper development of muscle and strength programs, the success of Endothil-CR as a bodybuilding product was "dumb luck," says Louis Rinaldi, spokesperson for Novex Biotech,™ the compound's developers.

"When research was first published on the compound's ability to help rebuild traumatized muscle tissue, trainers (believe it or not, a lot of athletic trainers are physical therapists who help get trauma victims back in shape) began suggesting the compound's muscle-and strength-building attributes could be a safe replacement for the most controversial performance enhancers (which are currently targets of Congressional investigation)," says Rinaldi. "As these cutting-edge trainers began recommending the compound to their competitive clients, they began to receive feedback like, 'I can't believe how much it helps my muscle and strength program' and 'I never experienced anything like this.' "

Dr. Daniel B. Mowrey, Ph.D., Novex Biotech's Director of Scientific Affairs, says, "Clearly, people were seeing results, but we didn't have a scientific explanation as to why this muscle mass and strength impact was occurring. However, based on the incredibly positive reports, it is impossible to just ignore the effectiveness of Endothil-CR."

Dumb Luck Strikes Again!

Then, in 2003, the results of an independent study of 31 fit males was released. During a double-blind, 6-week bodybuilding study, the active compound in Endothil-CR increased upper body strength by 100% and lower body strength by 249% after concentrated exercise (as measured by the amount of weight participants could bench press and leg press). And biceps circumference increased dramatically over placebo – more than a four-fold increase in circumference versus almost no increase with the placebo group (who were on the same bodybuilding program).

Since the study's release in December of 2003, researchers have been seeking a natural source for the active Endothil-CR compound. Finally, Novex Biotech discovered that, of all things, an extract of a special strain of green tomatoes could provide the active compound in the precise amount needed.

Who would have thought a compound developed to help people overcome muscle atrophy would go beyond nitric oxide, beyond so-called "precursors," to become the bodybuilding breakthrough of the decade?

That discovery led to Endothil-CR… a unique and proven method for muscle size and strength beyond what is acquired through the normal recruitment and differentiation of progenitor muscle cells. Finally, a way to assist your bodybuilding program for muscle and strength without steroids or steroid-like precursors.

But Is Endothil™-CR Illegal?

As of this writing Endothil-CR has not been banned by any amateur or professional organized sporting body including the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) or the International Olympic Committee (IOC).

Mowrey explains, "Most doctors understand the cumulative, detrimental effects steroid abuse has on the human body. Obviously, a compound that can impact muscle mass and strength has a clear and unambiguous benefit to both professional and amateur athletes..."

So, if you see athletes popping a tiny little pink tablet developed to help trauma victims regain muscle size and strength, don't think they've gone off the deep end… they may be smarter than you think.

So, What's the Catch?

To experience the full benefits of Endothil-CR you'll have to completely alter your workout routine. You can no longer do generalized, full-body workouts… you'll have to focus on a single, specific muscle group and exercise that muscle group to exhaustion. Why? Because exercise to exhaustion creates "trauma" and Endothil-CR helps your body by impacting the recruitment of progenitor muscle cells to repair (build) traumatized muscle tissue. The results? An increase in both upper and lower body (whichever area you exercise) muscle size and circumference… and increased strength.

These statements have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. This product is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure, or prevent any disease.

Having a hard time finding Endothil™-CR? If you've been searching for Endothil-CR, you already know it's become almost impossible to find. This tiny little tablet has attained "cult" status. Try your local GNC retailer (they always seem to keep it in stock), or try ordering through your local gym or supplement retailer. Can't wait? Your best bet is to call Novex Biotech™ at 1-800-919-9762, or order online at www.Endothil.com. The price is $59.97 for a full 30-day supply… one tablet taken 30 minutes prior to your workout every day.

By the way, Endothil-CR is backed by a 100% no questions asked, money-back guarantee: if for any reason you're not satisfied with Endothil-CR, simply return the empty container within 30 days for a full refund.

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RESEARCH SUMMARY

Endothil™-CR Helps Build Muscle Mass and Strength in Exercising Adult Men

Dr. Daniel B. Mowrey, Ph.D.

INTRODUCTION

It is well known that increased muscle mass and strength occur in the most effective manner when exercise routines are done to exhaustion, i.e, when exercise results in ischemia or hypoxia in localized areas of muscle. Hypoxia produces the "signals" required to boost muscle repair and growth in the area of strain. One of the goals of weight training is to build muscle without scar tissue. Too much exertion can tear muscle to the point where scarring will result. Too little exercise produces little increase in mass or strength. There appears to be an optimal point for maximal growth without scarring. Hence, currently the attempt to increase muscle mass and strength through exercise is constrained by these considerations.

As research begins to unravel the mechanisms involved in building muscle mass, it has become apparent that it should be possible to enhance muscle growth by stimulating certain aspects of the muscle building process. For example, we know that ischemia or hypoxia, with attendant inflammation and activation of so-called growth factors, produces signals that recruit the migration of progenitor cells from the bone marrow and blood stream to the hypoxic area to be used in rebuilding the muscle. The discovery of a method for enhancing the recruitment of the progenitor cells might increase the incorporation of these progenitor cells into the matrix of new muscle tissue, contributing to an increased muscle mass.

One of the crucial points in the muscle rebuilding process following exercise trauma may be the activation of receptors located on the muscle cells as well as on cells of the microvasculature in the muscle tissue. The most important of these receptors is the a7-nar (alpha-7-nicotinic acetylcholine receptor). Stimulation of this receptor initiates the cascade of events that eventually results in the repair of muscle and growth of new muscle. Repeated stimulation of the a7-nar actually results in the up-regulation of this receptor such that the efficiency of the system is improved and ever greater muscle growth becomes a distinct possibility. The localized nature of this process must be emphasized. Hypoxia is the localized environment that signals progenitor cells to migrate toward the site of muscle exertion. Thus, by isolating a muscle group in the right leg and exercising it using a specific exercise, you create an hypoxic zone in that area, so to speak, and you would expect only that leg muscle to benefit. This is good in that it allows you to work on specific areas of the body in a systematic manner.

Recently, a compound has been discovered that contains a naturally occurring active molecule known to activate the a7-nar. This molecule is the core substance in Endothil™-CR (ECR). It is theorized that, based on its ability to interact with a7-nars, the active molecule in ECR should stimulate the migration of progenitor cells from bone marrow and blood stream in much the same way that exercising to exhaustion does. If this is in fact the case we predict that the combination of exercise and the consumption of ECR will produce even greater muscle growth and increments in strength than either agent used alone.

THE STUDY

A study was designed to test the hypothesis that the administration of the core compound in Endothil™-CR to exercising men will lead to increases in muscle growth and strength exceeding those achieved through exercise alone.

SUBJECTS AND METHODS

Thirty one adult males ages 30-55 who had been following a weight training program to build muscle mass for over a year were invited to participate in the study. All subjects were non-smokers, taking no medications, and in good health. Weight training consisted of a three times per week exercise routine for six weeks. Sixteen received the active compound in ECR and fifteen subjects received a placebo pill identical in appearance. Both groups took their pills by mouth 30-45 minutes before workouts.

MEASUREMENTS

A number of anatomic and functional measurements were obtained on each subject prior to starting and at the completion of the study. These measurements included height (as measured with a calibrated Health O Meter stationeter), weight (on a balance beam scale wearing light clothes and no shoes), body mass index (body mass index = weight (kg)/ height (m)2), waist circumference (measured at the level of the umbilicus), biceps measurement (the circumference of the dominant biceps muscle measured at the middle of the muscle belly of the flexed muscle), quadriceps measurement (circumference of the dominant thigh measured 4" above the kneecap while the subject is standing in a relaxed posture), body composition, and skin fold measurement. All measurements were performed in duplicate. Upper body strength was measured by asking each subject to do 10 repetitions on a bench press or an incline barbell at the maximum possible weight at which they were able to complete the 10 reps. Lower body strength was measured by asking the subject to perform 10 repetitions at the maximum possible weight on a leg press or leg extensions machine. Both baseline and final pressed weights were recorded for upper and lower body strength. Compliance was determined by subtracting the number of capsules returned by the subject at the final visit from the number of capsules dispensed at the outset of the study.

RESULTS

After six weeks, the subjects who took the active compound experienced a significant ($p<0.05$) increase in both upper and lower body strength as well as in circumference of the biceps muscle. Specifically, the amount of weight bench pressed increased by 10 lbs. in subjects receiving ECR's core compound compared to an increase of 5 lbs. in subjects receiving placebo. The amount of weight leg pressed increased 70 lbs. in the experimental group versus 20 lbs. in placebo treated subjects. The treatment group experienced a significant increase in biceps circumference that was more than four times that of the placebo group, who experienced almost no increase in biceps circumference ($p=0.03$). There were no significant changes between the two groups in quadriceps circumference, % body fat, % lean body mass, weight, or body mass index.

DISCUSSION

Based upon the observations from laboratory experiments, in order for Endothil™-CR to exert a maximal effect it must be incorporated into an exercise routine. The exercise routine will have the most impact if it incorporates routines that produce muscle exhaustion. For example, doing pushups until you can't lift your body off the floor and then trying to do one more pushup, or doing situps until your abdominal muscles hurt and then doing five more situps. As mentioned at the outset, this kind of training should not be either over done or under done. It is not our goal to produce extensive damage with the idea that the greater the damage the greater the subsequent muscle growth. Yet, the exercise should result in enough ischemia (as defined as a decrease in the amount of oxygen containing blood to the muscle cells) and muscle strain (trauma) to produce the required signals for repair. Hence, for practical purposes, the end point of this kind of training is exertion to the point of exhaustion.

It should be emphasized that the impact of ECR is probably to augment a naturally occurring sequence of events that normally follows exercise to exhaustion; it is not to overlay a different process or to cause the body to do something unnatural, stressful or unusual. However, the result is something extraordinary in that a possibly synergistic relationship exists between hypoxia and ECR in the upregulation of a7-nars, a result greater than that produced by exercise alone.

Ultimately, the increase in muscle mass depends upon the recruitment and differentiation of progenitor cells into muscle cells. Exhaustive exercise causes hypoxia, ischemia, and muscle cell damage in localized areas of muscle, which in turn produce the signals that attract progenitor cells. Due to its known pharmacology in relationship to a7-nars, the core compound in ECR is hypothesized to likewise stimulate the migration of progenitor cells from the bone marrow and blood stream to the oxygen starved, fatigued tissue to rebuild muscle. It should also enhance the microvasculature of muscles which improves the efficiency of the recruitment of progenitor cells.

The mode of action in both cases (hypoxia and ECR) appears to be activation and upregulation of a7-nar in conjunction with similar activation arising from the presence of signals arising from the exhausted muscle. These signals are probably in the form of cytokines and growth factors. Differentiation at the site of the sore muscle cells occurs in the presence of activated a7-nars and improved oxygen and nutrient supply arising from improved microvasculature and a load of progenitor cells. Together, this mixture of factors results in differentiation, repair and growth.

In addition, it is hypothesized that the core compound in ECR is attracted to the site of trauma and acts to augment the differentiation and proliferation processes through any number of ways, but especially in attracting more progenitor cells to the area, which get caught up in the repair and growth processes, resulting in a net gain not possible without the presence of the ECR compound.

It should be noted that Endothil™-CR is not a miracle pill that will make your muscles grow while you sleep. ECR is an extremely specific and potent natural product that is believed to target the molecular and cellular mechanisms central to the repair and growth of muscle cells. By augmenting exercise-induced recruitment of muscle progenitor cells, ECR is believed to work in synergy with the metabolic effects of exercise to increase muscle size and strength.

In summary, these findings confirm the hypothesis that Endothil™-CR's active compound, in conjunction with exercise, produces a significantly greater increase in both upper and lower body strength and in biceps circumference than exercise alone. Although several of the steps in the process remain to be fully elucidated, the current study demonstrates congruence between the normal muscle building process and processes initiated by the consumption of ECR.

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Val Kilmer and Robert Downey Jr. fire their agents.

DECONSTRUCTING HARRY

Legendary *Lethal Weapon* screenwriter Shane Black is back from the dead—and he's brought Val Kilmer, Robert Downey Jr. and the private eye genre with him BY CLARK COLLIS

KISS KISS, BANG BANG

DIRECTED BY Shane Black

STARRING Robert Downey Jr., Val Kilmer, Michelle Monaghan, Corbin Bernsen

"MY NAME IS Harry Lockhart, and I'll be your narrator!"

With his voiceover at the beginning of *Kiss Kiss, Bang Bang*, Robert Downey Jr. serves immediate notice that this latest addition to the much-mined private eye canon won't be the usual fare. Having broken the fourth wall early on, Downey's Harry, a small-time New York thief turned Hollywood hopeful and pretend P.I., gleefully sets about reducing it to rubble as he apologizes for his own patchy narrative skills and the plot's seemingly hackneyed turns in a manner that's less cloying than it sounds. By skewering familiar conventions even while reveling in them—think *Scream* or *Adaptation* for the gumshoe-and-dame set—writer-director Shane Black hopes to restore some luster not only to the genre but also to his own stalled career.

"The hard-boiled private eye movie is really like a form of therapy," says Black, who started devouring detective novels as soon as he could read. "People are drawn to the idea of walking into a dispute where you can probe as deep as you want into all the horrible secrets of all these players."

Therapy it may be, but the private eye movie is also as dead as disco. In fact, it died around the same time the genre's already tired clichés—stylized narration, damsels in distress, labyrinthine storylines—were banished from cinemas by the special-effects-driven blockbuster in the late '70s. When there's something strange in your neighborhood, be it ghosts or sharks or Darth Vader, who you gonna call? Not a private detective, that's for sure.

However, Black has made a cottage industry of infusing stale formulas with wry wit. A Hollywood wunderkind at 23 after writing the original *Lethal Weapon*, his script for 1991's *The Last Boy Scout* found Bruce Willis's laconic shamus declaring, "This is the '90s. You don't just go around punching people. You have to say something cool first!" Black followed that mid-sized success with another self-aware private dick project, 1996's *The Long Kiss Goodnight*. But the film, which earned the screenwriter a record $4 million paycheck, was a box-office disaster and little has been heard since from either the genre or Black himself who, it was rumored, developed a decade-long case of writer's block.

"I was writing," insists Black, now 43. "I didn't see any of my scripts coming together in a way that I liked. Until, finally, one did."

JUST SAY NOIR

THE BEST PRIVATE EYE MOVIES OF ALL TIME AS CHOSEN BY SHANE BLACK

NIGHT MOVES (1975)
Gene Hackman and his hardboiled mustache investigate the disappearance of a movie actress's daughter.

THE BIG SLEEP (1946)
Humphrey Bogart must cope with a rich family's wayward daughters and a plot that thickens to granite.

CHINATOWN (1974)
Jack Nicholson loses the thing he loves the most—and part of his nose—in Roman Polanski's noir masterpiece.

Jack Nicholson: No longer seeing Michael Jackson's plastic surgeon.

KISS KISS, BANG BANG: COURTESY WARNER BROS. PICTURES; NICHOLSON: PARAMOUNT/THE KOBAL COLLECTION

That script was *Kiss Kiss, Bang Bang*, which also marks Black's directorial debut. By far his most tongue-in-cheek project to date, the film also showcases to great effect the talents of the troubled Downey and yet another of Hollywood's tarnished golden boys, Val Kilmer.

Downey's Harry is the film's nervy, bug-eyed linchpin who stumbles into a movie audition while on the run from the cops and winds up whisked off to Tinseltown to play a movie detective. To help him prepare for the role, he is placed under the tutelage of Kilmer's homosexual private eye, "Gay" Perry, and almost immediately the pair are knee-deep in corpses, frame-ups and postmodernist quipping, with Kilmer joining in the fun by apologizing to viewers in the Midwest for all the swearing. Black's evident knowledge of and love for the genre, combined with his ability to render even the most stereotypical characters as fully fleshed human beings, ensures that viewers will care about both them and the film's outrageously complex plot machinations.

"The difficulty was, when do you want people to think you're making fun and when do you want to pay homage to something you take very seriously?" explains Black. "It does go back and forth, to the point where you're not sure, even though you're having fun, that the character won't get shot in the stomach in the next scene."

Certainly, the result provides ample evidence that Downey, Kilmer, Black and the detective genre itself all deserve another chance. In fact, the film trades heavily in the theme of second chances, which, Black admits, was inspired by the realization that he himself had come to be regarded as a has-been.

"There was this gap between 1994 and 2000 where they filled every position in Hollywood with some freckle-faced teenager," says the onetime boy wonder. "And they were like, 'Hi, I'm sorry, who are you? The *Lethal Weapon* movies? That was back in the '80s, was it?' Yeah, *Kiss Kiss, Bang Bang* is almost *shamefully* self-referential."

BLENDER APPROVED

The best movies of the past months

WEDDING CRASHERS
Wilson and Vaughn star in nuptial-oriented hilarity.

THE BROTHERS GRIMM
Damon and Ledger star in Gilliam-directed fantasy.

LAST GOOD MOVIE YOU SAW?

ASHLEE SIMPSON
SINGER
"*The Dukes of Hazzard*. My sister looks so hot in her Daisy Dukes. I loved the TV show as a kid."

THE EXCITED-O-METER

THIS MONTH'S NEW RELEASES, RANKED ACCORDING TO OUR HIGHLY SCIENTIFIC METHOD OF GUESSING

VERY EXCITED

CORPSE BRIDE
Johnny Depp and director Tim Burton's second collaboration of the year is a welcome return to *The Nightmare Before Christmas*–style goth-o-mation in which a young man accidentally marries a corpse.

THUMBSUCKER
A troubled high schooler—the excellent Lou Pucci—attempts to cheer himself up by joining the debate club, getting high and fooling around. Which is fair enough, but why in that order, dude? *Why in that order?*

A HISTORY OF VIOLENCE
When Viggo Mortensen's diner is held up, the consequences are as unexpected as they are very, very bad. A lesser David Cronenberg movie, but one with a great set of performances from Mortensen, Ed Harris and Maria Bello.

EXCITED-ISH

THE GREATEST GAME EVER PLAYED
It's a Cinderella story! Actor-director Bill Paxton, who made the awesome horror flick *Frailty*, changes pace for this Disney flick about a 20-year-old caddy's attempt to win the 1913 U.S. Open.

EVERYTHING IS ILLUMINATED
This Elijah Wood–starring, Liev Schreiber–directed adaptation of Jonathan Safran Foer's unfilmable Holocaust-themed novel does have a lot of buzz. However, books are usually described as "unfilmable" for a reason.

ROLL BOUNCE
It's suburban Chicago in the '70s, and all the kids are into ... roller disco! Seems implausible, but that's the conceit of this surprisingly treacly comedy, featuring Bow Wow, Nick Cannon and an endless series of dance numbers.

NOT SO MUCH

INTO THE BLUE
Columbia Pictures is betting a whole bunch of money that the sight of a wet Jessica Alba will make up for what otherwise looks like a pretty thin tale of drug lords and sunken cargo. But, frankly, so would we.

AN UNFINISHED LIFE
A woman moves in with the Wyoming rancher father-in-law who blames her for the death of his son. Okay, so the cast (Redford, Freeman, J. Lo) is classy. But just read that synopsis again and see how excited *you* feel.

WEDDING CRASHERS: RICHARD CARTWRIGHT/NEW LINE PRODUCTIONS; GRIMM: COURTESY DIMENSION FILMS; SIMPSON: JON KOPALOFF/FILMMAGIC.COM; CORPSE: COURTESY WARNER BROS. PICTURES; THUMBSUCKER: TODD COLE/COURTESY SONY PICTURES CLASSICS; VIOLENCE: TAKASHI SEIDA; GREATEST GAME: JONATHAN WENK; ILLUMINATED: NEIL DAVIDSON/WARNER BROS. ENTERTAINMENT INC.; ROLL BOUNCE: 20TH CENTURY FOX; INTO THE BLUE: JOHN JOHNSON; UNFINISHED LIFE: COURTESY MIRAMAX FILMS

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A petulant Dylan refuses to get back in the car until his driver agrees to stop at Dairy Queen.

DO LOOK BACK

Martin Scorsese examines how chubby-cheeked Robert Zimmerman became the voice of a generation BY CLARK COLLIS

NO DIRECTION HOME

PARAMOUNT HOME ENTERTAINMENT

✪✪✪✪

SHAMAN. PROTEST SINGER. Traitor. Crap. Bob Dylan has been called many things, but few have ever called him genial or forthcoming. Blame it on age or on his 1997 near-fatal heart infection, but rock's most picked-over enigma is slowly opening up to define his legend on his own terms. If Dylan threw a flicker of illumination onto his formative years with last year's *Chronicles* memoir, this three-and-a-half-hour documentary, directed by Martin Scorsese and narrated largely by Dylan himself, is a klieg light.

Considering the archival footage that shows the subject in his prickly prime, *No Direction Home*'s candid new interview material, in which Dylan is not just un-gnomic but warm and funny, seems all the more startling. At one point, remembering his first girlfriends, he looks directly at the camera and says they "brought out the poet" in him, with a wolfishness that even Jack Nicholson might consider a bit much. Later, recalling his encounter with spiritual mentor Woody Guthrie at the mental institution where the latter ended up, Dylan's heartbreak, almost half a century on, is evident.

Less evident is the mark of Scorsese himself, who never spoke to Dylan during filming (interviews were conducted by Dylan's manager, Jeff Rosen); anyone expecting his usual flashy style should brace for a conventional, deliberately paced treatment. The combination of contemporary interviews and vintage film—including D.A. Pennebaker's electric-in-every-sense footage from the controversial 1966 British tour and the never-before-seen "Judas!" heckle—is so compelling, it's easy to overlook the ground *not* covered: Apart from one peer's comment that "Everybody wanted to get high with Bobby," no mention is made, for instance, of his drug use.

Moreover, the film ends with the terse proclamation that, after the '66 tour, Dylan retired from playing live for eight years in the wake of a motorcycle accident, even though some Bob-o-philes contest that said mishap was serious, or even that it occurred at all. Perhaps such issues will be covered in a sequel and, despite this film's butt-numbing length, here's hoping there is one.

MARTIN SCORSESE: THE ROCK & ROLL YEARS

IS THE MOB AUTEUR QUALIFIED TO MAKE A DYLAN FILM? FUHGEDDABOUTIT!

1969
An assistant director on *Woodstock*, Scorsese shows up in a blazer and cuff links; he promptly loses one in the mud.

1977
Audiences shun a rare Scorsese misstep, his disastrous De Niro/Minnelli jazz musical *New York, New York*.

1978
Burgeoning coke addiction notwithstanding, Scorsese sets the gold standard for concert films with the Band's *The Last Waltz*.

1983
Members of the Clash cameo in *The King of Comedy*. Plans for the band to do music for *Gangs of New York* are later scotched.

1987
Marty tries, unsuccessfully, to make Michael Jackson look tougher than Wesley Snipes in the 17-minute video for "Bad."

1990
Among *Goodfellas*' highlights: the Stones' "Monkey Man" as coke-paranoia freakout and the montage set to the "Layla" coda.

2003
Scorsese makes his PBS debut directing the documentary *Feel Like Going Home* about the Delta Blues.

2005
Ten years in the making, *No Direction Home* premieres. "When you say 'Bob Dylan' to me, I can't help it. I have to do it," he says.

FAMILY GUY PRESENTS STEWIE GRIFFIN: THE UNTOLD STORY

20TH CENTURY FOX

✪✪✪✪

Put into production after the animated sitcom's cancellation—but before its recent resurrection on Fox—this straight-to-DVD movie offers nutshell looks at what the characters did after the axe fell (mom Lois became a stripper, dad Peter ruined his chances of becoming a fireman by soiling his uniform). But, more important, it offers the writers a chance to be even more offensive than usual both in terms of dialogue ("Stick a fucking sock in it, you cow!") and subject matter. The plot, such as it is, follows demonic infant Stewie's attempt to track down his real father. Stretched to 90 minutes, the result doesn't feel quite as tight as a regular episode. But the sequence in which Michael Chiklis's character from *The Shield* is confronted by his brother—an equally huge, equally hairless pair of testicles—is worth the price alone.

FEVER PITCH

20TH CENTURY FOX

✪✪

To Drew Barrymore, new boyfriend Jimmy Fallon seems like the perfect guy—until she finds out about his obsessive love for the Boston Red Sox. Such is the premise of the Farrelly Brothers' bastardized adaptation of Nick Hornby's soccer fanatic memoir, their latest attempt to distance themselves from their gross-out comedy past. But in truth, Fallon's character comes across as so hapless and dull, the fact that he has a giant reproduction of Fenway Park's scoreboard in his apartment is pretty much the most appealing thing about him.

INSIDE DEEP THROAT

UNIVERSAL

✪✪✪✪

A porn film with a "plot" about a woman whose clitoris is located in her throat, 1972's *Deep Throat* cost $25,000 but grossed an estimated $600 million. The vagueness of that figure is in part due to the fact that the film raked in so much money for its allegedly mob-connected producers that instead of counting the cash, they began to weigh it. This fascinating documentary relates the movie's bizarre history with contributions from all the surviving principals, plus that holy trinity of porn studs: Norman Mailer, Gore Vidal and Dick Cavett. Hubba-hubba!

DYLAN: BARRY FEINSTEIN; SCORSESE: WARNER BROS./COURTESY EVERETT COLLECTION

Spoon, ironically, await silverware.

MOVING PICTURES

THIS MONTH, **SPOON**'S BRITT DANIEL REVEALS WHAT DVDS THE BAND USE TO ALLEVIATE TOUR-BUS TEDIUM

"We watched ***CHAPPELLE'S SHOW*** religiously for the first half of the tour, then we wore those out. And we watch ***THE BIG LEBOWSKI*** over and over again—so many good quotes, so much going on in that movie. Very subtle. I've been watching that movie for years, but this is the first time we've ever gotten to travel with a DVD player instead of just, you know, a radio."

DAVE CHAPPELLE: FOR WHAT IT'S WORTH

SONY PICTURES HOME ENTERTAINMENT

✪✪✪✪

"If a man can't pee on his fans, I don't wanna be in show business anymore." While panicked Comedy Central execs ponder whether the disappearance of their $50 million man was indeed urine-related, you can fill the Chappelle void in your life with this stand-up Showtime special in which the famously frazzled comedian hits easy targets like R. Kelly and Michael Jackson (whose sperm Chappelle convincingly argues may offer a cure for cancer). But also included are riffs addressing fresher terrain, such as the pros and cons of having sex with monkeys and why vacationing amongst Native Americans sucks. ("They gave me my own teepee to sleep in. I felt it was a little fucked up, because they all had houses.") Nothing about escapes to South Africa, however.

NEW JACK CITY

DREAMWORKS HOME ENTERTAINMENT

✪✪✪

Cutting-edge cracksploitation when it came out back in 1991, Mario Van Peebles's gangster film has, in truth, not aged very well. Certainly the menace of Wesley Snipes's iconic drug lord Nino Brown now seems lessened by the realization that he seems to have borrowed both his haircut and his eye-searing wardrobe from Bobby Brown. The extras on this two-disc set are impressive, though, and include the revelation in a making-of doc that co-star Ice-T actively campaigned to get the movie renamed *Killin' Up Shit*.

THE MAN WHO FELL TO EARTH

CRITERION

✪✪✪✪

This is clearly David Bowie's finest film, which, we realize, is damning with faint praise. In Nicolas Roeg's elegantly mystifying 1976 sci-fi movie, the Thin White Duke excels as a thin white alien who arrives on Earth in search of water for his dying planet of presumably similarly androgynous people. Look out for an equally excellent turn from a pre–*Larry Sanders Show* Rip Torn and, on this Criterion Edition, commentary by both Roeg and Bowie himself.

BLENDER APPROVED

The best DVDs of the past months

THE DAILY SHOW: INDECISION 2004

PARAMOUNT HOME ENTERTAINMENT

Relive the most absurd moments from 2004's fake election coverage.

LOST: THE COMPLETE FIRST SEASON

BUENA VISTA HOME ENTERTAINMENT

Like *The X-Files* meets *Gilligan's Island* ... only good.

MUSIC DUDs

Ooh! Conor got a haircut!

FARM TEAM

The corn-fed visionaries behind Omaha's Saddle Creek Records tell their rags-to-moderate-riches story BY LAUREN HARRIS

VARIOUS ARTISTS
SPEND AN EVENING WITH SADDLE CREEK

PLEXIFILM

✪✪✪

Successful independent labels are products of their locales—D.C.'s Dischord was politically charged, New York's Matador oozed hipper-than-thou cachet—so it only follows that the Midwestern indie geeks behind Omaha's Saddle Creek are fiercely tight-knit, genial, humble and yeah, maybe a little bland if you're not from there.

While the label's DIY business practices may fly in the face of industry convention—profits are split 50/50 with artists, the artists are actually good—the film itself is fairly by-the-numbers, offering sedate talking-head interviews with Saddle Creek's soft-spoken principals along with plenty of rough-hewn '90s-vintage archival footage.

Though new-New Wavers the Faint (and their forebears Slowdown Virginia) get plenty of screen time, the star of the film—and the label—is still boy-genius Conor Oberst, a.k.a. Bright Eyes. He may be a doe-eyed indie pinup with permanent bed-head now, but this documentary offers concrete proof of his checkered past as a bespectacled, squeaky-voiced pre-teen prodigy.

THE BEST OF THE REST

EMERSON, LAKE & PALMER: BEYOND THE BEGINNING *(SANCTUARY RECORDS)* ✪✪✪ Suitably bloated four-hour-plus career overview of the prog-classical overlords. Live footage, videos, a documentary and the hilarious sight of a mid-solo Carl Palmer ringing a giant bell with his teeth all feature ... **RICK JAMES: SUPER FREAK LIVE 1982** *(EAGLE ROCK ENTERTAINMENT)* ✪✪✪✪ It's nice to see Rick James in his sparkly-unitarded, pre-parody heyday. His 10-piece Stone City Band impressively hold it down during James's frequent—ahem—"costume changes" ... **VARIOUS ARTISTS: DIRECTORS LABEL VOLUMES 4–7** *(PALM PICTURES)* ✪✪✪ Anton Corbijn, Jonathan Glazer, Mark Romanek and Stéphane Sednaoui: You may not know these video directors' names, but you know their work, thanks to decades spent staring glassy-eyed at Jay-Z and Björk on MTV. Get how-did-they-do-that? testimony from the directors and the artists they made look good ... **BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN: VH1 STORYTELLERS** *(COLUMBIA MUSIC VIDEO)* ✪✪✪✪ A beefed-up version of the Boss's minimalist solo special, complete with expanded songs and extra regular-guy anecdotes, taped this past spring in Jersey before his E Street Band-less *Devils and Dust* tour. LAUREN HARRIS

SPOON: AUTUMN DE WILDE; STEWART: CONRAD MULCAHY; LOST: BUENA VISTA HOME ENTERTAINMENT INC. & TOUCHSTONE TELEVISION; OBERST: ANDY FALLON/CAMERA PRESS/RETNA LTD.

Nic Harcourt: Keeps costs down by broadcasting from his kitchen.

POD PEOPLE

Two new books are godsends to anyone who has an iPod but no clue what to put on it BY HUA HSU

MUSIC LUST: RECOMMENDED LISTENING FOR EVERY MOOD, MOMENT AND REASON

By Nic Harcourt

✪✪✪✪ *SASQUATCH BOOKS, $17*

THE POCKET DJ: ULTRAGRRRL'S GUIDE TO BUILDING THE BEST MUSIC LIBRARY

By Sarah Lewitinn

✪✪ *SIMON SPOTLIGHT ENTERTAINMENT, $10*

AS DAY JOBS go, Nic Harcourt's gig isn't bad—as host of the influential, anything-goes *Morning Becomes Eclectic* on Santa Monica's KCRW, his mission is to find music he loves and champion it to the public-radio-loving masses. (Then again, he claims Dido among his discoveries, so be warned.) Harcourt follows the success of Nancy Pearl's lit-themed *Book Lust* with this A-to-Z book of record recommendations organized around mood (driving songs, protest songs), genre (Afro-beat, Britpop) and whimsy (sister acts, bands named after cats) that perfectly complements the freeform spirit of his program. Despite some missteps among his essential 1990s discs—Talk Talk charts as frequently as all the hip-hop acts *combined*—Harcourt comes off as the best kind of know-it-all: friendly, passionate and wise enough not to show off too much.

Renowned for her spunky, rock-heavy DJ sets, New York party girl Sarah Lewitinn's *Pocket DJ* will be useful only to those who need a book to tell them "Rico Suave" qualifies as cheesy. Where Harcourt enlivens his selections with micro-history lessons, Lewitinn opts for page after page of basics-mastering, commentary-free playlists. While *Pocket DJ* might be useful for helping Junior populate his first iPod, Lewitinn's numbing approach forgets that good taste means being able to explain *why* you like something.

HEY, ROCK STARS *CAN* READ!

SERJ TANKIAN OF SYSTEM OF A DOWN REVEALS WHAT'S ON HIS NIGHT STAND

THE HOLOGRAPHIC UNIVERSE by Michael Talbot *HARPER PERENNIAL, 1992*

"Because another reason besides the one given to us daily for our existence is vitally necessary. This physics theory book also has the best research on near-death experiences I've ever seen … very interesting."

MOONAGE DAYDREAM: THE LIFE AND TIMES OF ZIGGY STARDUST

Photographs by Mick Rock
Text by David Bowie

✪✪✪✪ *UNIVERSE, $50*

No gender-confused aesthete's coffee table would be complete without this collection of photos from Bowie's *Ziggy* zenith. Bowie himself provides running commentary to the rare pics, tracing the development of rock's glammiest icon. *STEVE KANDELL*

TV A-GO-GO
ROCK ON TV FROM *AMERICAN BANDSTAND* TO *AMERICAN IDOL*

By Jake Austen

✪✪ *CHICAGO REVIEW PRESS, $19*

With essays on topics such as the idiot box's dismal relationship with punk and the history of black music on TV, this serves as an authoritative guide to televised music. The author's Achilles heel is a lack of humor, particularly disastrous given the often hilariously diabolical nature of his subject matter. *CLARK COLLIS*

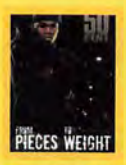
DREAM BOOGIE: THE TRIUMPH OF SAM COOKE

By Peter Guralnick

✪✪✪✪ *LITTLE, BROWN & CO., $28*

At 700-plus pages, no one can accuse Guralnick of skimping on details about Cooke, a former gospel singer–turned–'60s soul titan. While accounts of Cooke's recording sessions get tiresome, the author's skill in describing the tightrope walk black musicians had to make in the '50s and '60s is undeniable. *GABE SORIA*

BLENDER APPROVED
The best books of the past months



FROM PIECES TO WEIGHT: ONCE UPON A TIME IN SOUTHSIDE QUEENS

By 50 Cent *MTV/POCKET BOOKS, $23*

The Thug King of All Media proves himself an able raconteur.

RARE BIRDS

Photographs by Amanda de Cadenet *POWERHOUSE, $35*

Candid shots by the girlfriend of Strokes guitarist Nick Valensi, including pics of … the Strokes!

HARCOURT: LARRY HIRSHOWITZ; TANKIAN: ROBERT SEBREE

"Stop, or we'll continue shooting!"

BRAIN POWER

Mix classic zombie lore with over-the-top gore and a kitschy indie soundtrack, and you've got one of the most entertaining games in recent memory BY LIBE GOAD

STUBBS THE ZOMBIE: REBEL WITHOUT A PULSE

ASPYR, XBOX, PC, MAC

★★★★★

THESE ARE HEADY days for zombie aficionados: *28 Days Later*, *Shaun of the Dead* and *Land of the Dead* have brought new life to the genre. Gaming's new zombie crown jewel puts you in the foul-smelling shoes of Edward "Stubbs" Stubblefield, a fashionably decaying former salesman intent on making the hapless citizens of the retro-futuristic town of Punchbowl, Pennsylvania, his personal buffet.

Using a refreshingly simple control scheme, our unarmed antihero takes down legions of puny humans using the classic mouth-to-brain method. Guys with guns pose more of a problem, but Stubbs's ability to turn victims into a shambling zombie army, combined with a seemingly never-ending supply of his own exploding viscera, evens the odds. He has other tricks up his sleeve, literally, like a detachable hand that can be sent scurrying, *Addams Family*–style, into hard-to-reach areas. When in a jam, Stubbs can even release a round of—this has to be a videogame first—"unholy flatulence," which sends everyone in the vicinity to the hereafter.

In the game's most distinctive feature, Stubbs chows down to a litany of tongue-in-decomposing-cheek '50s covers such as "Lollipop," the Flaming Lips' version of "If I Only Had a Brain" and Death Cab for Cutie's electrified "Earth Angel." After all, a little music always helps you digest.

JOYSTICK JAMS

INDIE POPSTER **BEN KWELLER** TALKS ABOUT COVERING THE SICKLY-SWEET "LOLLIPOP" FOR THE SICKLY-SICK *STUBBS THE ZOMBIE*

Ben Kweller won't stop pouting until he gets his lunch money back.

KWELLER: MICHAEL WARING

KWELLER SAYS:
"When they asked me to record a song for a gruesome zombie game set in the 1950's, I tried to think of the happiest bubblegum tune from that era, and "Lollipop" came to me right away. I thought it would be extra demented if you were killing people to this overly giddy song."

***BLENDER* SAYS:**
He's right—the straight-faced Kweller sticks to hand claps and a cappella vocals, which, when accompanying exploding heads, is indeed demented. *STEVE KANDELL*

F.E.A.R.

VU GAMES, PC

★★★

The X-Files meets *Rainbow Six* in this first-person shooter for the conspiracy theory set. Taking its cue from story-driven action games like *Half-Life 2*, *F.E.A.R.* follows a supernatural SWAT team, dubbed First Encounter Assault and Recon—get it?—tasked with taking down a psychic madman in charge of a top-secret clone army … or something. But you're not in this for the plot; you're here to blow stuff up, and that you'll do.

WE LOVE KATAMARI

NAMCO, PS2

★★★

The simple premise: Roll a sticky ball around to collect crap and then shoot it into outer space. The original *Katamari Damacy* could lull the most addled brain into submission, and the sequel is just as refreshingly basic. Look for retooled camera angles, another catchy J-pop soundtrack and a half-baked two-player cooperative mode to add marginal improvements to the oddly addictive gameplay.

BLITZ: THE LEAGUE

MIDWAY, PS2, XB

★★★★

After forcing all the fun out of recent football arcade games, Midway dropped the NFL license and created a fictional football universe where players can break opponents' bones, pump teammates full of drugs, score cheerleaders and learn the controls without consulting a triple-indexed book. If you think losing the NFL seal means no superstar celebs, don't despair: Lawrence Taylor lends a healthy disregard for authority.

X-MEN LEGENDS II: RISE OF THE APOCALYPSE

ACTIVISION, PS2, XB, GC, PSP, PC

★★★

Despite the presence of Patrick Stewart as the wheelchair-bound Professor X, the bestselling *X-Men Legends* is based on the classic Marvel comics, not the soon-to-be-ruined movie franchise. The sequel serves up more of the same, giving the Stan Lee treatment to the action RPG genre, including online multiplayer mode for beating down bad guys with your online "friends."

BLENDER APPROVED

The best releases of the past months

MORTAL COMBAT: SHAOLIN MONKS

MIDWAY, XB, PS2

Action-packed spinoff brings kung fu hustle into the classic series.

CODED ARMS

KONAMI, PSP

It's no *Doom 3*, but the PSP's first-ever first-person shooter game gets the job done.

WIN THIS THINGY!

Hey! Wanna keep track of your life, go online, look at photos and videos *and* listen to totally non-illegally downloaded MP3s? Then send us a correctly filled-out crossword puzzle, and maybe we'll send you a Dell Axim X51V handheld. Or maybe we won't—who knows?

PENCIL ME IN

Hey, it's *Blender*'s crossword! Starring 10 across!

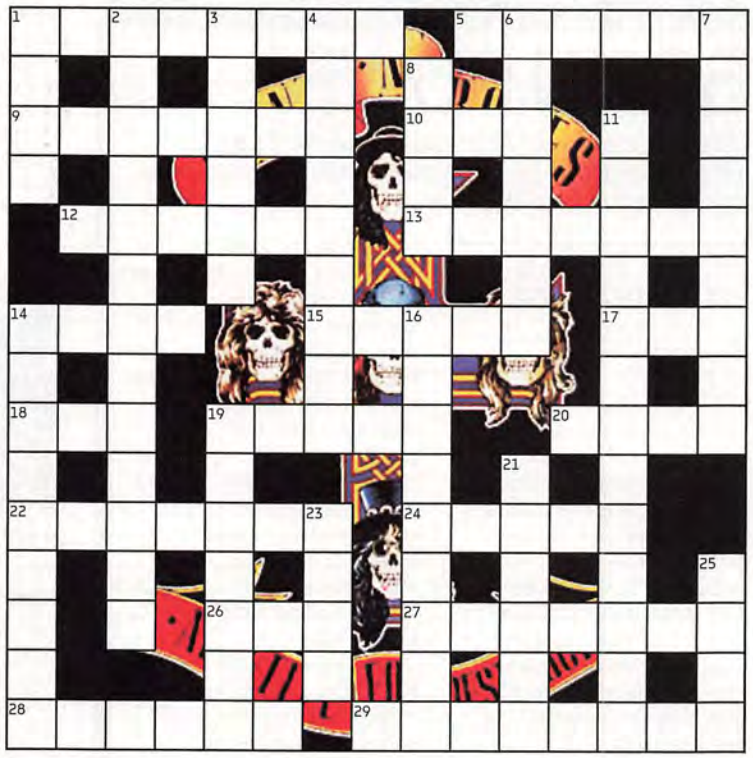
BY BRENDAN QUIGLEY

ACROSS

1 Vehicle for cutie?
5 Dolby who was blinded by science
9 Caribbean chanteuse with the 2005 hit "Pon de Replay"
10 The only original member left in Guns N' Roses
12 "I wanna get ___ man. Like a sex machine" (James Brown)
13 Alison Krauss, musician-wise
14 ___ Overkill
15 Scissor Sisters are this
17 "___ Ng" (They Might Be Giants song)
18 Ronnie James ___
19 Rimes with rhymes
20 James hit that goes, "This bed is on fire with passionate love"
22 "It Keeps ___ A-Hurtin'" (Elvis)
24 Zappa patriarch
26 Cube, T or Vanilla
27 *Fijación Oral* chanteuse
28 Kanye West-produced "sleeper" hit by the Game
29 Feel Good (Inc.) cartoon band

DOWN

1 "___ Off Your Shoulder" (2003 hit for 25-Down)
2 R.E.M.'s home base (two words)
3 Brothers who had the 1997 bubblegum hit "MMMBop"
4 She's been left outside alone
6 1983 Madonna hit, or 2005 Green Day hit (no relation)
7 Atlanta trio with "Something More" to offer
8 "I'm ____ the man I used to be" (STP lyrics)
11 This song is bananas, B-A-N-A-N-A-S (two words)
14 Latest *Idol* winner Carrie
16 Industrial rock's Meat Beat _____
19 Nirvana song that, ironically, starts off "I'm so happy"
21 "Surfin' ___" (1962 Beach Boys hit)
23 "___ You Tonight" (INXS hit)
25 Rapper who rocks Rocawear



→ Send your completed puzzle to *Blender* Puzzle Contest, 1040 Avenue of the Americas, 22nd floor, New York, NY 10018

ROUND 7 STELLASTARR* VS. *BLENDER*

POP STARS aren't known as cerebral types, so *Blender* challenged the whole lot of 'em to a game of chess, hoping for an easy, ego-boosting victory. Each month, a different star will make a move, and we'll respond until we finally capture that crowny-looking doodad. **ARTHUR KREMER**, drummer for New York art-rockers **STELLASTARR***, attempts to sink our battleship this month.

STELLASTARR*'S MOVE

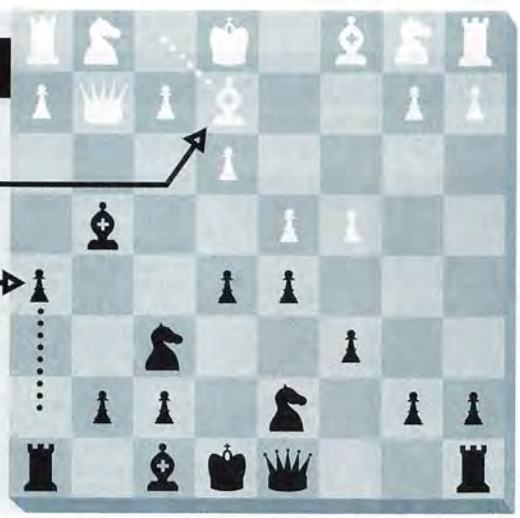
BISHOP TO E2

***BLENDER*'S MOVE**

PAWN TO H5

Former U.S. Chess Federation president **Don Schultz** says:
(On Stellastarr*) Good move: It develops White's Bishop and threatens Black's.
(On *Blender*) Also a good move, as it protects Black's bishop and prepares to open up Black's rook.

COME BACK NEXT MONTH AS THE **EGGHEAD SMACKDOWN** CONTINUES!



PHIL KNOTT

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SOME THINK SHE'S A TROUBLED TROUBADOUR WHO'S FINALLY SETTLING DOWN. OTHERS THINK SHE'S A NOTORIOUS HOLLYWOOD MADAME. BUT ...

BY ROB TANNENBAUM
PHOTOGRAPH BY JESSICA ANTOLA

WHO DOES SHERYL CROW THINK SHE IS?

THAT SELF-PORTRAIT DOESN'T RESEMBLE YOU VERY MUCH.
No, but it does explain how I am right now. [*Laughs.*] Everybody who interviews me says, "You're so dark, you've had so much trouble in your life." I always think that out of this chaos, particularly right now, there's a wildflower growing, and you just have to take notice of it.

SO WHY DID YOU NAME YOUR NEW RECORD *WILDFLOWER*?
It's about my last year—being in a new relationship [with cycling god Lance Armstrong], living in Spain and watching what was happening in our country. Anyone who is inquisitive has to look at the religious right and the way it's dictating policy and say, "Why are we letting this happen?" Religion is good, but it doesn't belong in politics. Still, at this stage in my life, even with all the craziness, I'm still very hopeful.

LET'S SAY IT'S FRIDAY AT 11 P.M.—WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
If I'm not working, Lance and I are probably home, with his kids. And if he's racing, then we're asleep.

YOUR SCHEDULE AND HIS MUST BE VERY DIFFERENT.
They are totally day and night—and I mean that literally. My day starts around 1 P.M. when I'm on the road, and by then, he's in mid-workout. Now that he's retired, we're gonna get on *my* schedule, by golly. I'm gonna force him to sleep until 9:30 in the morning.

DO YOU REMEMBER YOUR FIRST EXPERIENCE WITH ALCOHOL?
I remember drinking pink lemonade and pure grain alcohol with my girlfriends in Missouri when we were 15. One girl's mom owned a Camaro, so it seemed only fair that we should take it. She got grounded, and most of us wound up throwing up pink barf.

IF WE DRUG-TESTED YOU, WHAT WOULD WE FIND?
Caffeine. That might be it. To be perfectly honest, I never really took drugs. I maybe even just *tried* pot.

HAVE YOU EVER STOLEN ANYTHING?
Nope. When I was a kid, the minister said to us, "If you steal, you go to hell." And I just really didn't want to go to hell. I thought that would suck.

WE'LL LET YOU KNOW. WHAT PERSONAL HABIT OF YOURS DO OTHER PEOPLE FIND ANNOYING?
I snore. I've had two or three people complain about it. "Well why didn't you wake me up, or tell me to turn over?" "I did."

WHAT WOULD YOUR EX-BOYFRIENDS SAY ABOUT YOU?
That they blew it. [*Laughs.*] I'm gonna leave it at that, though that *is* kind of a joke.

HOW MUCH IS A QUART OF MILK?
$1.49. Is that about right? Listen, I go to the grocery store. Lance has three little kids—I know how to fix Kraft mac and cheese. And I do my own laundry. But I'm not so keen on cleaning toilets.

HOW WOULD YOU CHARACTERIZE YOUR TASTE IN SEX?
Oh jeez! I'm saving myself, because I'm not married yet.

HAVE YOU EVER BEEN MISTAKEN FOR SOMEONE ELSE?
Yes, and I'm too embarrassed to tell you who. It's so heinous.

OH, C'MON. IT CAN'T BE THAT BAD.
I was on my way to Vegas. My first record had just broken, and these guys wanted my autograph. I thought, "Oh God, they *recognize* me." Turns out they thought I was Heidi Fleiss. Being mistaken for a madame?

WERE YOU POPULAR IN HIGH SCHOOL?
I was homely, but everyone else was homely too. And flat-chested. Now, I see 10-year-olds who already have boobs. I'm still wanting in that area, but even when I was 15 or 16, I was just a boy.

WHAT WON'T YOU EAT?
Oatmeal. It makes me gag. It's like eating vomit and then wanting to vomit it back out.

THERE GOES THE OATMEAL AWARENESS COUNCIL SPONSORSHIP. ARE YOU A GOOD GIRL OR A BAD GIRL?
I'm innately a good girl. Unless I'm drinking red wine or tequila. Ugh. Tequila and I, we had to have a separation for a while. With good tequila, you don't even know you're wasted until you're wasted.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE CURSE WORD, AND HOW DO YOU USE IT?
"Oh, that is so fucking stupid."

"STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN" OR "FREEBIRD"?
"Freebird." I can totally get with that Southern, beer-drinkin', leather hat-wearin', Harley-drivin' scene. Those are my peeps. I've been in cover bands since I was 17 or 18, so I've sung "Freebird."

AND IF SOMEONE SHOUTS "FREEBIRD" WHILE YOU'RE ONSTAGE?
That's when I use my favorite curse word. [BLENDER]

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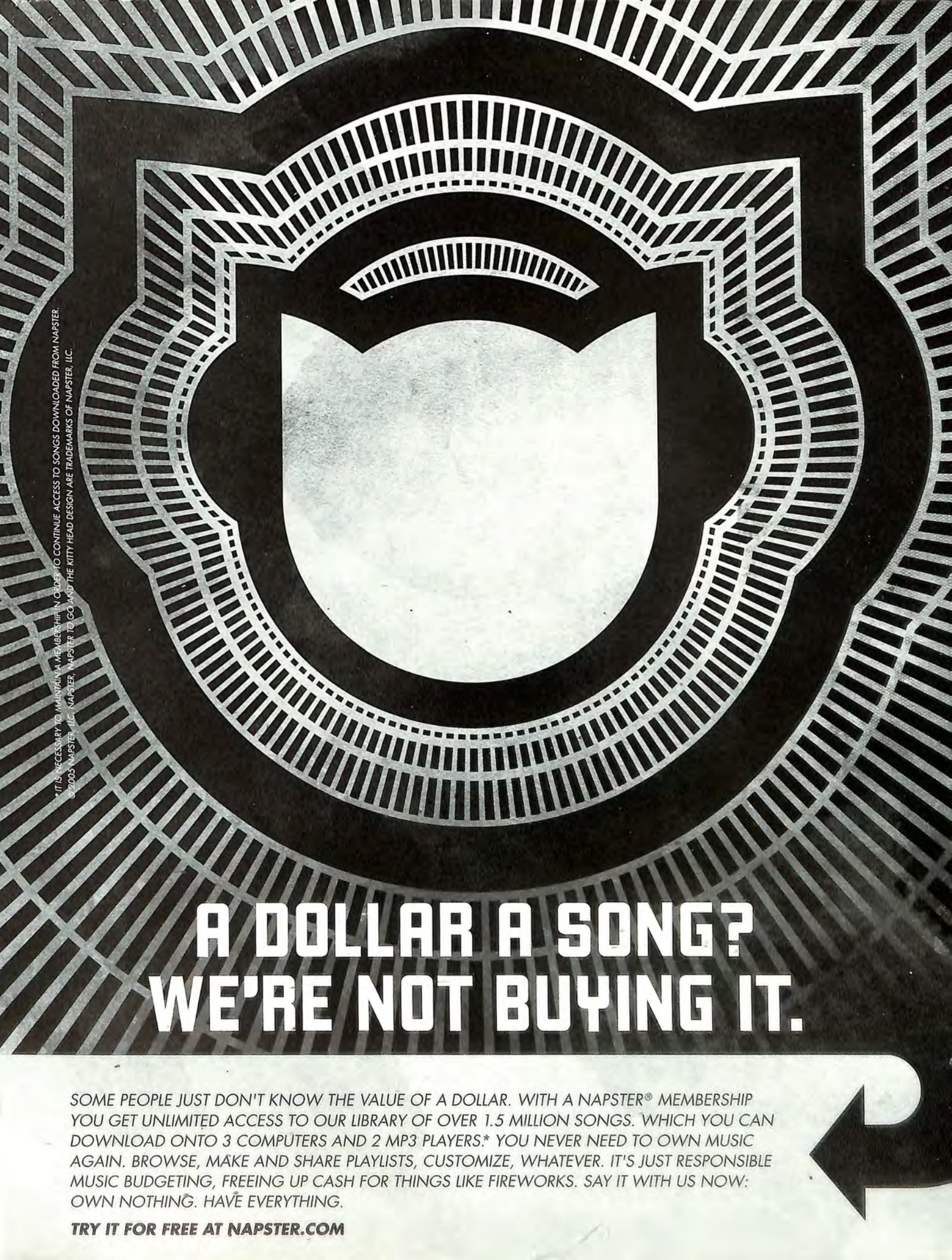
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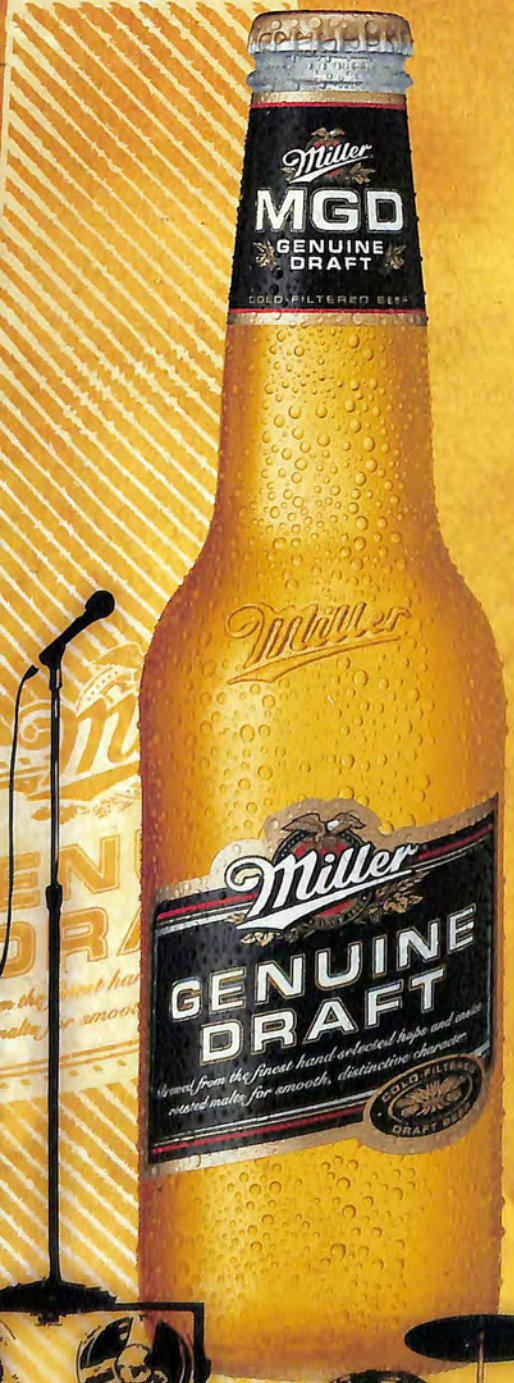

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